

THE
MIRROR OF TASTE,
AND
DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.]

JANUARY, 1811.

[NUMBER I.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 413, Volume II.]

A DESCRIPTION has already been given of the *ENTREMETS. The MYSTERIES are next to be described: and, as they found their way into the other nations of Europe, as well as France, and may be considered as ranking among the most monstrous and extraordinary anomalies to which the human brain has ever given birth, they deserve a very full and particular share of description.

Few pursuits are more pleasing than the tracing of human inventions, from their highest state of perfection, back to their first unshapen rudiments, and searching in the wide range of conjecture for the first seeds of their conception in the human mind; for, although of such questions no certain solution should be found, the inquiry forms a delightful intellectual exercise; and the result, if at all plausible, comes in time to be taken for granted, and answers a purpose to all intents as useful as the most absolute discovery of truth. Thus the old conjecture, that the breast bone of a water fowl first suggested the idea of that immense moving body which now carries the thunder of Britain from pole to pole, having enough of plausibility to pass uncontradicted, soon obtain-

* See Vol. II, page 414.

ed the consent of a world which had neither light nor leisure to investigate such subjects, and, though at first sufficiently problematical, at length acquired the dignity of a postulate. On the subject now in hand proofs are more relevant and perfect, being sanctioned by concurrent testimonies in history.

It has already been stated that the barbarous exhibitions called FEASTS, which the French derived from the Romans, received their first shock from the enthusiastic religious spirit diffused through Europe by the crusaders. The *entremets* declined in proportion as the chivalrous spirits of France moved off to the Holy Land; and when the knights of the cross returned from their frantic and disgraceful enterprise, they brought back along with them such multitudes of stories respecting chivalrous adventures, that the christian world was filled with them. Prodigies of valour had no doubt been performed on both sides; but the very nature of the passion which generated the enterprise, and the enthusiasm of those employed in it, rendered it highly probable that for the fame which they acquired by the relation of their prowess they were indebted at least as much to the invention of the narrator as to their own actual deeds of arms.

Such as the stories were however, they were readily believed by a people prepared to receive any tale discreditable to the proselytes of Mahomet, and honourable to christian gentlemen and warriors. Credulity has the digestion of an ostrich; and the people, one and all, not only swallowed with ease, but sanctified from all contradiction, many of those incredible legends, so that to doubt them was deemed a heresy from the orthodox faith. The priests, then the chief, or only dramatists, turned those stories to their advantage, and made them the subjects of plays. The appetite of the public, however, soon began to flag; enthusiasm gradually settled down to something like a rational level; the fierce blaze which dazzled the eyes of the christian world insensibly passed off; and as it faded, the eye of reason, enabled to look more steadily at the object, perceived that it was all madness. Thus the plays founded on the crusades fell into disrepute; and the priests, intent upon preserving to themselves so affluent a source of emolument, desisted from singing the feats of sacerdotal knights errant, and taking up sacred history in their stead, composed and acted dramas founded upon the incidents, and personifying the characters, of the old and new testaments. In order to give full effect to their purpose, and

as much as possible preclude opposition or interruption, they formed themselves into a society, to which they gave the name of "THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE PASSION," and, to defray the expenses of their project, brought over some of the most wealthy citizens of Paris to enter into their scheme, and supply the funds, which they themselves were either unable to advance, or unwilling to hazard upon speculation. With the money obtained from these their proselytes, they erected a theatre in the vicinity of Paris, in the *Bourg de St. Maur des Fosses*, a place consecrated to piety, having been long the resort of pilgrims, who visited it for the purposes of devotion. This theatre they opened with a mystery which they called "The History of the Death of our Saviour."

Nothing could surpass the popularity which this species of amusement obtained at once. The number of its followers were incredible. The rage for it spread in all directions, and infected the people with something like an epidemic insanity. The wheels of the public economy were clogged, business was left at a stand, and all, even the most important concerns of life, were neglected for the gratification of this new passion. The evil became at length sufficiently alarming to call for the interposition of the secular authority. The magistracy took it under their cognisance; and in the year twelve hundred and ninety-eight, the *prevôt* of Paris issued his interdict to suppress the performance of the mysteries. The authority of the civil magistrate, however, was no match for the influence of the priests, who not only got rid of the effects of his interdict, but cunningly turned the interference of the *prevôt* to their own advantage. They petitioned the king to take off the interdiction, and had the address to put their petition into a shape that excited his curiosity to see their performances. Accordingly they were invited to play before him, and his majesty was so delighted with the poetry and acting that he established the society and their theatre by letters patent. No sooner was it known that the society was established under royal auspices, than the grandes became ardent admirers and proselytes of the drama; the fashionable world followed it with eagerness; multitudes of men of rank became members; and not only the greatest in the king's household, but the king himself, condescended to enrol their names in the company.

Their original theatre being found insufficient, in accommodation of every kind, as well as splendor, it was resolved to have another;

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but instead of constructing a new one, they cast their eyes on a large building originally founded for the reception of pilgrims, and denominated the Hospital of the Trinity, and converted it into a theatre for the representation of their mysteries. From the descriptions which have been handed down of this theatre, it was admirably constructed for the purpose of giving effect to dramatic exhibitions. The front much resembled those which exist in Britain, France, and America at this day: but all behind the curtain and belonging to the stage differed extremely from them; and being intended for the representation of actions not only on earth, but in heaven and in hell, was so constructed as to represent those three places with great facility. The contrivance and the execution of it is said to have displayed vast mechanical ingenuity. Was the scene to be laid as if in heaven, an enormous congeries of clouds expanded to an immense height, and spread to an extent of which the eye perceived no limits, convolving around the stage: if on earth, the stage represented something like our country scenes, the extremity exhibiting an immense expanse, on which natural objects appeared in proper places: and if in hell, the whole stage was lifted up like the jaw of a monstrous dragon, representing a tremendous and interminable abyss, the mouth of which, vomiting fire, gave up legions of devils.

The first mystery the society represented, intitled, as has been already stated, "the Passion of our Saviour," is thought to have been in all probability written some centuries before; a conjecture which arose from the name of the author being unknown. But for the rest of their dramas, the fraternity are said to be indebted to three poets, who flourished at the same period, in the thirteenth century, and whose writings were deposited among the choice manuscripts of Charles the Sixth. The names of those were Rutebeuf, Bodel, and Adam de la Halle. All their productions that are known were mysteries, which, in their way, were considered excellent. The most celebrated of them being, first, "The Prodigal Son;" secondly, "The Miracle of Theophilus;" thirdly, "The Crusades;" and fourthly, "St. Nicholas and the Children in the Tub." These three poets had a multitude (some say not less than sixty) of inferior imitators, of whose compositions some scattered passages are imperfectly spoken of in the history of the French stage. All, however, were alike founded on scripture subjects, reduced to dialogue and action; and some of them are reported to have contained

much valuable matter mixed up with more rubbish. It is acknowledged, that whenever the subject, though scriptural, turned from mere religion to things purely domestic and simple, and referred to matters of mere naked morality, abstracted from religious mystery, those writers displayed profound knowledge of the dramatic art, and showed that they possessed many requisites for the composition of amusing and instructive dramas.

As a confirmation of this opinion, it may not be amiss, nor indeed can it be uninteresting, to give a short analysis of one of the pieces just mentioned, "The Prodigal Son," composed by Rutebeuf, so long ago as the year 1240. The story of the Prodigal Son, exclusive of the reverence it demands, as a parable of holy writ, exacts our highest admiration as a simple, natural and affecting lesson of morality. Of the privilege thus afforded him, Rutebeuf has availed himself by departing as much as possible from the track of mystery, and giving the piece up to morality, simplicity and nature. He places his scene in a beautiful country, and makes his characters opulent labouring husbandmen, a class of people to whom, according to nature, any real wants are generally as little known as the artificial necessities of life. From this he contrives to give, in the character of his Prodigal Son, one of the most beautiful and faithful pictures imaginable of the restlessness of human nature.

Blessed with health, strength and competence, for every wise or honest purpose of life, and assured of every rational blessing for nothing more than the trouble of earning it, the Prodigal Son makes it the business of his life to run counter to reason. He is as vicious as a human being can be supposed to be made without the contagion of bad example. In return for the fondness and unbounded indulgence of his father, he disobeys and torments him; he abhors his brother for no other reason but because, being good and dutiful, he is a contrast to himself; he grows discontented, malicious and wicked; at length determines to go seek his fortune, and, to that end, demands his patrimony, and leaves his father's house. Thus cast forth upon a world, of whose ways he is ignorant, he is delighted, astonished and confounded. He greedily swallows the flattery of the knavish and the interested; and, wilfully credulous, admits the praises bestowed upon his accomplishments, of which he knows himself to be destitute, and receives the compliments lavished on him for his wisdom, his wit, his eloquence and his en-

dowments, though in his heart he knows them to be false. In the next stage of depravation, the poet makes him actually fancy he possesses those accomplishments which he before doubted, and in this mood makes him inveigh, with great asperity, against his father and brother for endeavouring to depress his genius, for undervaluing his great merits, and for considering him as no better than a clown, who was born to linger out his life in obscurity. Here the poet brings him to the acme of his folly, and then, by means not less natural and conformable to the experience of man, and to true poetical justice, brings him down to ruin.

He is then found in a public house, where he experiences all the venal respect paid to wealth by the sordid and the selfish. Attendants and waiters fly at his call, and the landlord himself is his humble servant. A lady enters. He immediately falls in love with her. Dinner is served up with wine, music and every treacherous incentive to enjoyment that can "lap the soul (of a fool) in elysium." A second lady is introduced, becomes a competitor with the former for his good graces, and fills him with the ridiculous and ruinous imagination that he is beloved by both, and that they are rival candidates for his affection. He endeavours to satisfy them by assuring each separately that she and she alone is the object of his dearest regards and shall be his choice. They intoxicate him with their flattery, and during the paroxysm, make him drink till he gets dead drunk, when they pick his pockets, share the booty with the landlord, and, leaving him asleep, disappear. In due time he wakes, discovers his loss, deplores and deprecates his folly, grows frantic, raves like a bedlamite, and calls for satisfaction on the landlord, who answers his expostulations by demanding payment of his bill, and when the unhappy wretch declares his incapacity to pay it, kicks him out of the house.

In the next stage the poet exhibits his prodigal HERO begging alms on the highway. And now misery, bringing reason and repentance in its train, calls up his home, with his father and his indulgence and advice, to remembrance, and he weeps in an agony of despair and contrition. His brother then recurs to his mind, living by honest industry and frugality in content and abundance, and his folly smites him to the soul at the contrast of his condition of profligacy and want. While he is in this deplorable condition a countryman finds him, and commiserating his starving situation, employs him to feed his hogs. And now he has time and motives

for reflection; the whole of his errors flash conviction on his mind: his repentance becomes deep and unalterable; he resolves to return to his father, and he does so. The father receives him with tenderness: the fatted calf is killed, and the play has precisely the same *denouement* as the parable.

Under the name of a mystery, then, here is a regular drama, replete with simple but impressive morality; a perfect, natural and well coloured picture of man as he ever was, is, and ever will be. The piece too is full of poetical excellence. The plot is perspicuous, grand, delightfully simple, and full fraught with instruction. Though the poet neglected the frigid rules of Aristotle, he studiously investigated nature, and, therefore, without any of the crabbed rules of the Stagyrite, has given his drama a well connected, lucid arrangement—a beginning, a middle, and an end. Had all the mysteries been managed in this way, there would have been no cause, as undoubtedly there was, for reprobating many of them as ridiculous and impious profanations of the holy scriptures.

The objection which holds to the use of sacred matters as subjects for dramatic pieces, does not extend to the writing, but to the acting of them. An attempt to personify beings whose essence we are incapable of even remotely conceiving, is absurd in the highest degree; and, therefore, in its application to things divine, truly abominable. When confined to poetry, in which the being is figured to the imagination, but not corporeally impersonated to the eye, descriptions may be not only admissible, but majestic, awful, sublime: such are the descriptions in Milton's Paradise Lost and Regained. But let us imagine the same scenes dramatized and exhibited in substantial personification, and what can be conceived more intolerable? The more sacred the subject, and the more sublime the poetry, the greater would be the burlesque in action. Fortunately, the mysteries, as they were generally composed, received no addition from the grandeur of the poetry, which was, in most instances, truly miserable; but, on the other hand, it is lamentable to think, that the priests, in their mistaken zeal, always selected the most sacred stories in holy writ, and, therefore, the most dangerous to couple with levity and expose to ridicule and burlesque. Perhaps the excessive enthusiastic religious zeal, and darkness of those times, and the simplicity of the people, may have prevented the effect which the representation of them would now produce: but at this day, nothing can be a more offensive outrage

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upon christian piety than an impersonized performance on the stage of such sacred subjects as the conception of the virgin Mary, the passion of Christ, and the resurrection. Nor can we help pitying the ignorance or condemning the impiety of the country where such things were permitted.

"The Mystery of the Conception," says the able historian, to whom we are so often indebted, "is composed in fifty-three acts, distributed historically, and traced all the way from the prophecy of **ISAIAH** to the murder of the innocents, and, without mentioning the choruses, has at least one hundred characters. To go over the plot would be to reiterate all we have read on the subject in the New Testament, which is on the stage tediously spun out in four feet verse, with now and then a few awkward alexandrians, perpetually fishing for the sublime and catching the bathos. The joy of the human race on the coming of the Messiah is truly poetical; so is the discomfiture of the devils; but if it had not been larded with the jokes of the landlord of the inn at Bethlehem, and the devils putting new bolts and bars upon limbo, for fear our Saviour should let out Adam and Eve, it would not have been seasoned to the palates of the people.

"The jests also of those who are employed by Herod to murder the innocents, might as well have been spared; nor can it be forgiven that the devils, after they have tempted Herod with so many flattering promises of reward, should instigate him to cut his throat, afterwards kick his soul about till they are tired, and then enjoy the pleasure of seeing it bubble in a furnace of molten lead." For such was actually the profanation and absurdity which the dramatic ecclesiastics acted upon their theatre; and yet these, for which absurdity is too mild an epithet, and which were sincerely meant for sanctity, are much outdone in impiety by the mystery of "the Passion," and still more by that of "the Resurrection," which actually finishes with a figure dance between Adam, Eve, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, the good thief that was crucified, and an immense number of souls, supposed to be just liberated from limbo.

Wonderful and extravagant as it may appear, these mysteries gained such high reputation in *Paris*, that they spread all over the kingdom. *Reuen*, *Angers*, *Le Mans*, *Metz*, and most of the principal towns, had a company of strollers detached from Paris, by the confraternity, for the pious purpose of exhibiting these mysteries.

Among the rest VILLON, the poet, in the fullness of his zeal, became an itinerant, of which a very satirical and ludicrous account is given by the learned and witty RABELAIS.

It may be amusing to read the titles of some of those mysteries taken literally from the French, as published.

"The Triumphant Mystery of Catholic Works in the acts of the Apostles, taken from St. LUKE, Evangelist and Historiographer; by ARNOT GREBAN, Canon of Mons."

Another was called the History of the Old Testament. The title ran literally thus—"The Old Testament in which is shown how the children of Israel passed the Red Sea and reached the Land of Promise, with several other histories, such as Job, Tobit, Daniel, Susannah, and Esther."

A third,

"The Vengeance of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem, executed by Vespasian and his son Titus, contained in several Roman chronicles in the reign of Nero, and other fine histories in honour of our Saviour and the court of Paradise."

A fourth bore this title,

"The mystery of the patience of JOB; and how he lost all his wealth by war and by fortune; how he was reduced to the greatest poverty; and how every thing was rendered back again by the grace of God"

A fifth was intitled,

"The sacrifice of Abraham—this is a French tragedy necessary to all christians that they may find consolation in times of tribulation and adversity."

This last bore no feature of a tragedy, though called one to give it attraction at a time the public rage for mysteries had abated.

After this, familiar things were considered fitter subjects for the drama than sacred ones. It is evident too, that the authors, who were now chiefly laymen, did all they could to put down that misuse of sacred subjects, and wrote in a way to bring it into contempt. It is impossible otherwise to account for the preposterous titles given by them to some of their pieces; such as

"The joyous mystery of the three kings," and

"The pleasant conceit of the apocalypse of St. John of Zebedee, in which are contained the visions and revelations of the said St. John of Patmos."

We shall conclude this strange portion of the history with a literal translation of a mystery, in which will be found much piety in language and in thought; but which in the personification of the persons, and representation on the stage, must have been terribly revolting to any heart sensible of the religious passion. We take it from one of the most respectable of the English publications.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

An Angel.	St. John.	St. Simon.
St. James.	St. Bartholomew.	St. Thomas.
St. Peter.	St. Matthew.	St. Philip.

The Holy Ghost is seen to descend.

The Virgin Mary.
Mary Magdalen.

The Angel appears and says to the spectators: Oh, ye, who are desirous of seeing that which is the foundation of your faith, rejoice; your wish shall now be accomplished: lend an attentive ear, and look; then shall you be made acquainted with the wonderful miracle of the Holy Ghost: now, be peaceable and content, and, if it please God, we will begin.

Saint James now comes, and raising his eyes to heaven, says: I reflect, see, wish, and believe that it may be right to visit Mary; her excellent oratory is flattering to God: she can accomplish my desire. I will entreat her to exert the influence which she, a virgin mother, holdeth over her son; I will tell her the time is already past, in which the Holy Ghost was to descend from heaven.

Saint Peter arriving goes toward Jerusalem to seek Mary, but seeing Saint James stops, saying: Whither, James, art thou going, thus in tribulation?

Saint James answers, weeping, and embracing him: Oh, Peter, I am right glad to see thee.

Saint Peter says: Tell me why?

Saint James: Since thou art there, I will tell thee; but do thou have the like complaisance.

Saint Peter replies: I am bound to oblige thee.

Saint James says: Now listen, Peter, and be my words precious to thee. It is my intention to visit the mother of Jesus Christ, that she may remind the Father it is time for God to send us the Holy Ghost from heaven.

Saint Peter with emotion replies: Thy words expand my heart, and an equal zeal inflames my soul. Let us go, and tell her to recommend us to the Son, that he may display to the Father the jealousy which consumes us, if this envoy come not from above, to crown our zeal.

The Angel appears to the apostles, to relieve them from suspense, and says:
Fervent, holy, and just apostles, whatever your thoughts or wishes may be,
put on a stouter countenance; for, to tell you the truth, you have the ap-
pearance of malefactors. If you delight, apostles, in the faith of God, wait
with a trusting heart; the favour you ask will soon be granted. Now be at
peace; let this suffice.

The angel being vanished, the apostles remain in an ecstasy of divine love.

Saint Mary Magdalen says to the Virgin Mary, making her a respectful
courtesy: Since it is the will of thy Son, Mary, and he is content thou shouldst
be inimitable, none are thy equals: I therefore will depart, with thy leave,
for I am unworthy to be thy companion; but I will obey thee as a daughter;
give me thy blessing and an embrace, and receive the visitors that anon will
be here.

The Virgin Mary, looking at her, replies: Is this the friendship and the af-
fection which I thought thou didst bear me? Thou addest to my affliction.
Oh, do not withdraw thyself from my love!

Mary Magdalen says: I obey thee, noblest of mothers; and I hope thou
wilt love me as a servant.

The Virgin Mary takes her by the hand, and answers: Nay, as a sister.

The Magdalen: It is not permitted.

The Virgin Mary: Yes, it is.

The Magdalen: That must not be: I am content to be thy servant; of
greater honour I am unworthy.

The Virgin Mary, troubled at these words, says: If thou wouldst not bring
greater affliction on me, yield to my wish, my dear Magdalen.

Mary Magdalen replies: What affliction, Mary?

The Virgin Mary: That which thy words occasion.

The Magdalen: That must not be. I am ready to oblige thee.

The Virgin Mary, well pleased, says: My wish is then accomplished.

[*The two Marys again seat themselves.*]

Now Saint John, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Matthew, and Saint Simon, the
apostles, ascending a hill, their eyes and hands raised to heaven, inspired with
divine ardor, and gazing on each other, say with one voice:

Let us all with pious zeal begin our journey, and go in search of Mary,
 the Mother of God. Let us proceed with good thoughts, prayers, and
 brotherly love; because such will always be grateful to Jesus, who, with his
 divine angels, will not forsake us. Let us seek Mary, the Mother of God.

When they have proceeded a little way, they meet Saint Peter, and Saint
James, whom they embrace. Saint Peter then says: Where are you all going,
thus in holy ecstasy?

Saint John replies: We are going to seek the Holy Ghost.

Saint Bartholomew says: Pray for us, since we have met thee.

Saint Matthew says: Alas, Peter, do us this pleasure.

Saint Simon says: Do not refuse us this favour.

Saint Peter answers: Come all of you with me, and let us depart with joy
and rejoicing, under the standard of Mary, the mother.

They all depart, saying: Since, Mary, thou art to make us happy, this we request, and nothing more desire; that thou wilt guide us, empress, to thy kingdom: our thoughts fixed on thee, we are ready to depart; snatch us from the sorrows of age, and from the snares of the demon, who is the root of all evil, that thy prayer may be granted. Jesus, send thy Holy Spirit to the inspired, and let thy glory be our boast: deign to favour thy kneeling apostles; who each, in his orisons, invokes thee.

Saint Thomas says, by himself: I have sought the Holy Ghost, through many countries, in vain; it is high time he should discover himself. Moreover, I have thoughts of relinquishing the search. Thomas, thou carriest thy courtesy too far; this peregrination is not to my liking. I will rest myself on the road side, till I have decided whither next to go.

He seats himself, Saint Philip finds him, and says: Well met, faithful comrade.

Saint Thomas replies: The same to thee. Say, where art thou going, my Philip?

Saint Philip says: In search of the Holy Ghost, whom I have long wished to see.

Saint Thomas answers: I too have sought him, and am now resting myself. I have put faith in dreams, and words, only to be mocked.

Saint Philip, grieving, replies: Alas, Thomas, speak not thus! Knowest thou not that faith by itself is sufficient? Rise, and stay no longer here: fortunate is he who puts faith in the Lord. Speak no more the language of distrust; it will not procure thee what thou demandest of the Lord. Come, let us continue our search.

Saint Thomas, again taking his seat, says: I tell thee, I will trouble myself no more.

The angel, seeing them, appears, and says: Your desire is agreeable to the Lord, and shall be granted: take this path. Knowest thou not, Thomas, the Lord is just; that the sword in its proper place can strike? Mend thy manners, and proceed with thy companion: thy comrades are before thee, on their road to the cloisters of Jerusalem, to visit Mary.

Saint Thomas, standing up erect, says in great affliction: Alas, anger overcame me! I have wrongfully abused my God: my shilling is turned to a penny.* I have lost the grace of the Lord; he is, I am sure, incensed against me. Oh, my soul, who will bring thee consolation? The Lord, alas, parted himself from thee, and thou art called to the abyss of hell!

Saint Philip, consoling him, says: Be comforted, God pardons thee: heardest thou not the angelic words? The heavenly crown will be thine. Let us seek those who are before us.

Saint Thomas replies: I am thy inseparable companion.

Saint Philip says: Let us proceed, the sun is yet high; if we meet our comrades on the road, we will go in a body, and visit Mary.

* A un soldo è tornata la mia lira. A lira is a coin worth twenty soldi, about tenpence, English money.

Meeting the others, Saint Peter says: Welcome Philip; welcome my Thomas.

Saint Thomas answers: Well met, my comrades.

Saint Peter turns to his companions, and says: Children, this appears to me the house of holiness: let jubilee, good cheer, and harmony, be with us.

Saint John says: Flower of virtue, vase of knowledge, Philip, thou art welcome.

Saint Peter says: Let us all proceed to Jerusalem, where we shall find the Mother of God.

They all depart, singing aloud: Jesus, when we shall have seen this worthy goddess, our souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law. Thy zealous servants will brave death, and the most cruel torments, in thy honour. Oh, Jesus, grant our wish, and our souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law.

Being arrived in the presence of the Virgin Mary, and having paid their obedience, Saint Peter says: He, Madonna, who lay in thy womb, salutes thee; and by his love maintains the harmony among us, which is so grateful to him. He likewise wishes thee to deliver us from a heavy affliction, by the holy mystery of his birth.

The Virgin Mary answers: It is my duty to oblige thee. Welcome to thee and to all thy company. Let each speak freely, for to ask a boon of me is a trifle.

Saint Peter replies: Now hear, Mother of the Omnipotent, the wish that labours in my bosom, and makes me sad; the wish that, above all things, I value. When thy Son ascended to heaven, he said he would depute to us the Holy Ghost. Thy intercession is the object of our demand. Not that we doubt his word; for, kind as he is, and supreme in power and mercy, he will not abandon his faulty servants, whom he has left on this earth.

Mary answers: I will pray for you; dismiss your fears.

Saint Peter continues: Alas, I recommend myself to thee.

Mary replies: Thy wish shall be accomplished.

Saint John says: Madonna, thou knowest we are deserted little orphans;* thou art our only resource; take pity on thy poor servants, for each is in the school of impatience. We are crazy, ignorant, and neglected. Thy prayers will fly to heaven: thou art our eternal guide; thy will governs heaven and earth.

Saint Bartholomew says: Mary, thou art the pilot of this vessel: give us consolation; steer it into port, and guide us, each, with thy sweet propitious breath, to salvation.

Saint Matthew says: Lighten this heavy burden, that we may take the straight path; and that the strayed wanderer may return with thy aid, O Virgin Mary!

Saint Simon says: Oh thou, who, in despite of this humble dwelling, art the exalted Mother of our Lord, in whom the sweetest pity reigns, deign to assuage our grief!

* *Orfanetti*, a diminutive of *orfani*: a flattering and kind expression.

Saint Philip says: In charity, condescend to offer up thy all-potent prayers!

Saint James says: Yield to our united entreaties, for I know God will not refuse thee.

The Magdalen says: Pray, Mary, grant their request! Thou art their support, their treasure; as they have already told thee: fulfil their just and holy wish; remember they were the companions of thy Son, and stop the rivulet of their tears.

Saint Thomas says: Mary, relieve the afflicted from their tribulation; thou seest that all apply to thee, invoking thy potent succor.

Mary replies: I will not oppose your combined wish, for your voice is heard in heaven. To reward your holy obedience, I will, in my wisdom, address my Son.

She, kneeling, continues: Son, if ever a wish of mine had weight with thee, let me obtain the request I now make. These, the companions of thy life, are in anxious expectation of seeing the Holy Ghost, as thou didst promise; deliver them from affliction. By the holy conception, which laid thee in my womb; by the divine angel, Gabriel, who came to announce thy nativity; by the milk, which nourished thee; by my unremitting cares; by the countless steps made by the jack-ass, when thou fled'st, a humble lamb, from Herod; by the joy and anguish I have borne for thee, let me remind thee of thy loving apostles, who are living in affliction, and conjure thee to speedily give them the wished for satisfaction. Now, all join with me in prayer, and raise your eyes to heaven.

All the apostles, kneeling, chant the following Hymn of praise, with the Virgin Mary: Oh, Jesus, thou who hast been our conductor, here, in company with Mary, let our dolorous complaints cease. Listen to our fervent prayers, and grant relief to thy kneeling, and afflicted, servants. Oh, Jesus, show us grace; let our souls banquet on thy eternal holy light!

This Hymn being sung, the Holy Ghost descends from heaven, and the Virgin Mary, incircled with divine rays, says: Now your wish is granted; be pleased to initiate yourselves in the divine revelation. Your just prayer has been heard, and Jesus will always bear you company.

Saint Peter says: Thou wilt soon, Mary, be left alone; I will not abandon thee.

Mary replies: Depart, with the benediction of God, and remember the passion of our Lord.

The apostles depart, and the boy, dressed as an angel, takes leave, saying: He, who would have a place in the celestial choir, must implore the mercy of Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost will be sent to him, by my supreme Lord Jesus, who has suffered so much, on earth, to regain Paradise for us: he now dismisses you; always bear him in mind.

THE END.

In Siena, alla Loggia del Papa, 1616: i.e. printed at the Office or Palace of the Pope.

Upon this the English translator makes the following judicious remarks.

"It is surely a subject of great moral and literary curiosity to afford authentic specimens of the progress of the stage; and to pretend to represent and make palpable to the vulgar, a miracle so impossible justly to conceive, as that of the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, must denote a dangerous excess of rash ignorance in the people and the age. Yet, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, similar exhibitions were the amusement of all ranks: they were the contrivances of monks, respected by the wealthy, and the delight of the people.

"In the Pinelli library, which was sold by auction some years ago, were four volumes, No. 3576,* containing a collection of these holy mysteries; and from volume IV. of this collection the above piece is taken. The translation is as nearly literal as can be required: it is a faithful picture of the verbosity, insipidity, and irreverend manner, which pervade these pieces. The attempt at the politeness of urbanity, in this piece, is remarkable. It was chosen at a venture; for human patience could scarcely endure the fatigue of going through the volumes to discover either the worst or best. I have read enough to convince myself that the difference is not great: of the dull, the profane, and the ludicrous, they are all composed. Some are founded on histories, in the Old and New Testaments; others on legendary tales of Saints; and many on the miracles.

"Notwithstanding the absurdity, and even that which a more enlightened age might perhaps call blasphemy, of these pieces, while they show the simplicity of the people, they also afford sufficient proofs of the reverence, admiration, and zeal, with which they listened to the holy tale, thus represented. They could not admire the diction, eloquence, or wit of them, for they possessed none: in the subtle refinements of mind, such spectators could find no enjoyment: but the miracles, which they believed conduced to their salvation, were listened to with a rapture such as only could be felt by implicit faith. They believed what they heard, were astonished at the information they received, and felt all the raptures

* The third and fourth volumes are in the possession of the editor: they contain ninety-eight pieces, many of them duplicates, and are labelled by the Italian binder—*Antiche Rappresentazione Sacre*. Their titles and extracts may hereafter be given in the Theatrical Recorder, as curiosities.

proper to credulity. Saint Jerom, with his lion in the wilderness, Saint Antony, his pig, and diabolical temptations, or Saint Paul, preaching before Felix, were to them equally true.

"Such historical facts as these, respecting the change of ages and the progress of the human mind, truly interpreted, are awful: they should warn us that it is the propensity of the mind to hold opinions, which are common to the age in which men live; that, while they are only entertained as opinions, though absurd, they are innocent and ought to be respected; and, that persecution for opinion is the most dangerous of the mistakes of man."

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

The justly celebrated actor.

IT may be considered as a proof, not the least satisfactory, of the superior greatness of a man, that nations contend for the credit of having given him birth. Seven illustrious cities of Greece disputed the claim of having given birth to Homer: or to use the expressive lines of the poet,

Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodes, Argos, Athenæ,
Orbis de patria certit, Homere.

And the English, with Dr. Johnson at their head, have endeavoured to steal the cradle of Swift from a small court in Castle street Dublin, where Letitia Pilkington has in her Memoirs, and Mr. Thomas Sheridan, who knew all about it much better than Dr. Johnson could, has in his life of the Dean, nailed it down for ever.

Respecting the birth of Mr. Cooke, there was for a short time some contention, between England and Ireland; the former claiming his birth because he owed his education to her, while the latter laid claim to his education because she gave him birth. The truth however is now publicly ascertained in different biographical sketches; and, to such honour as a nation can derive from the birth of a man of genius, and an illustrious actor, Ireland is intitled, on the score of Mr. Cooke. His father was a subaltern officer in the British army, and whether Irish or English by birth, was quartered in the barracks in Dublin, in the year 1756, at which time and place, the hero of these memoirs was born. Indeed, his being an

Irishman, is rendered probable by the circumstance of his marriage; our hero's mother who was a lady of very high Scottish extraction, having clandestinely married him for love; thereby entailing upon herself the displeasure of her family, whose proud sense of dignity and hereditary loftiness even narrow circumstances could not depress. Adventures of this kind are generally supposed to belong more peculiarly to young Irishmen than to others: But since there are fortunehunters of every country, we should not hazard a conjecture on the subject if it had been an interested match on his part: money however was not in the case; the connexion therefore was one of those mere love matches, to which the Irish are so much more prone than their fellow subjects, and which their more cool and calculating neighbours call imprudent.

All the sketches of Mr. Cooke's life, which have appeared in the periodical publications, are so very barren of biographical facts that little more is to be collected from them, than that he was born, educated and became a player; all of which was sufficiently known before: but respecting his family, the fate of his father and mother, and whether they died or still live, these productions are all silent. While destitute of *authentic* materials from the press, discretion enjoins us to be cautious of making use of those which we have been able to collect from report and hearsay information. Much, very much, has been related of Mr. Cooke, in private conversation; much too in the public prints, and in the vagrant train of paragraphs, anecdotes, bonmots, greenroom gabble, and theatrical chitchat with which the newspapers of England abound. The far greater part of these we distrust too much to admit them into this sketch, as facts. We recollect, however, to have heard some years ago, from persons who not only well knew Mr. Cooke, but took, as we thought, a deep and sincere interest in his fame and welfare, that his parents highly resented his going on the stage, and carried that resentment to the grave, to his entire exclusion from the little patrimony to which his birth entitled him; and, that this circumstance made an impression upon his sensibility which had nearly been fatal to his life, and was thought to be the *radical cause of all his subsequent misfortunes*. As this was given not only with every appearance of sincere sorrow, but with a minute circumstantiality of detail, seldom associated with falsehood, we did at the time give it full credence; and we have not since had any reasonable grounds for withdrawing our belief; at the same time we

should be sorry to be responsible for the authenticity of the facts, and therefore will barely say that from collateral circumstances, they seem to us at least probable. If they be true, then it may reasonably be inferred from them, as well as from his being an officer in the army, that Mr. Cooke's father, as well as his mother, was of a high gentleman's family; since inveterate prejudices against the stage life, and a contempt of actors, have for a long time been unknown to any other description of people.

While our hero was yet a child, his father went, probably with his regiment, to London, where he remained five years, then moving to the North of England, placed George at a school, at which he remained till he had accomplished his fifteenth year. It was during this period of his life he first conceived an attachment to the stage, or to use his own words, as they are related of him, became infected with the theatrical *mania*.

The first play Cooke ever read was *Venice Preserved*; than which, not one in the British drama is more calculated to fasten itself upon the heart of a boy of warm imagination, or to nourish in him and augment a secret natural predisposition for the drama. The same cannot be said of the first play he ever saw: the courtly gravity of Lord Townly in the *Provoked Husband*, even if it had been better performed than it could have been by Mr. James Aickin, being little calculated to kindle the flame of genius in a youthful bosom: *Venice Preserved*, however, was fully sufficient; and the boy felt his appetite for dramatic poetry now so very keen, that he had no rest till he borrowed from a clergyman, who resided in the town, a complete set of Shakspear's works, which he may be said rather to have devoured than perused. A volume of his adored poet was his manual by day, the companion of his pillow by night: On him he meditated incessantly, and, to use the words of Hamlet, hung upon the great bard, "as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed upon." His exclusive devotion to this object of idolatry broke in upon his school studies; his tasks were neglected, or but half performed; and he was often compelled to pay the smarting price of birchen discipline, for the delight he received from the drama: but the severity of his master, however just, had only the effect of all severe persecutions, and attached him the more violently to his ruling passion. The bent was fixed in his nature; opposition increased it; and soon enough opportunities occurred of practical operation, which completely confirmed his propensity, and gave to

the predisposing influence of his will, the full force and effect of habit.

The enthusiasm of our hero imparted itself, though in a less degree to his companions. The glowing effusions of Shakspear's muse poured forth by him incessantly "with good emphasis, and good discretion," could not be entirely resisted by the warm sensibility of ingenuous youth; and it was at length agreed that a play should be got up among themselves, and acted privately. The choice of the piece being left to Cooke, he selected Hamlet, intending to perform the principal character himself: He had the mortification, however, to find that his youth evicted him from the part in the opinion of his companions, and to see a comparative dunce usurp it, only because he was elder. He was obliged to take up with Horatio therefore, which he did with great regret. He had, nevertheless, cause to rejoice in the end, for he had the consolation of a complete triumph over his rival Hamlet; since, circumscribed and unimportant as the character of Horatio is, his performance of it was such that he made it in acting the superior character of the two, and obtained more applause than the Hero of the piece. The next play, which our juvenile party enacted, was Cato; in getting up which, a circumstance occurred still more unpropitious and revolting to our hero's feelings. To avoid all cause of altercation, it was agreed to determine the cast of the *dramatis personæ* by lot. Cooke drew Lucia: and such was the chagrin he experienced at the idea of wearing a petticoat, instead of strutting in a Roman toga, that the supposed degradation had nearly quenched the ardor of his passion, and crushed his scenic ambition in its very outset. But the plaudits, he received, afforded a seasonable relief to his irritation.

On his emancipation from school discipline, in 1771, he went to sea, and afterwards embarked in business; but less from inclination than necessity. Accordingly, at the age of twenty-one, he spurned at trade, as an occupation unworthy of his aspiring mind, and, coming into possession of a legacy bequeathed him by a distant relation, quitted all employment, to indulge his favourite passion and pursuit. It was not, however, till he had run through his inheritance, that he made his *debut* on the public boards.

His first appearance on any regular stage was in the spring of 1778, when he performed the part of Castalio in the *Orphan*, at the Hay Market theatre, for the benefit of Mrs. Massey; and, with such complete success as determined him to embrace the profession as

his future means of support. He played two or three subsequent nights at the Hay Market, and then joined a provincial company. From this period, till the summer of 1786 (with the exception of nearly two years, when a second family windfall enabled him to act the part of the gentleman *at large*), Cooke ran the customary round of Thespian itinerary; passing his novitiate in various provincial companies, particularly those of Nottingham and Lincoln. In July 1786, he enlisted under the banners of the York manager, Mr. Wilkinson, and came out in the part of count Baldwin, the same night that Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance at that theatre, in Isabella, in the Fatal Marriage.

The May following, he repaired to Lancaster, having joined the Newcastle company, with whom he continued four years, performing successively at Newcastle, Chester, Lancaster, Preston and other towns belonging to that district. In April 1791, he entered into an engagement with the manager of the Manchester theatre, to whom his talents were already experimentally known; Mr. Cooke having, previously to his treaty with the York manager, acted at Manchester a whole season with great applause, besides a winter spent at Liverpool. In November 1794, Mr. Cooke visited the capital of the sister kingdom at the pressing invitation of Mr. Daly, at that time director of the Dublin stage.

He returned to England the following year, and in March 1796, rejoined the Manchester company, with whom he stood in high favour and repute; and, indeed it reflects no small honour on the taste and penetration of the inhabitants of that town, that among the foremost to discern, they have been among the foremost likewise to foster and encourage the talents of a man, who owes his professional success entirely to his own intrinsic merit.

In October 1797, Mr. Cooke made a second trip to Dublin, the management of that theatre having devolved into the hands of the present patentee, Mr. Jones. Here he remained three years, rapidly rising in celebrity and favour, being justly regarded as the hero of the Dublin stage, and the Roscius of Ireland.

The state of the internal policy and economy of Covent Garden theatre, rendering it at that time indispensably necessary to secure a powerful accession of talents, in the event of certain contingencies then undecided, the proprietor very naturally directed his inquiring eye to our hero, whose growing reputation and acknowledged excellence pointed him out as the fittest person to counter-

balance the weight of popular talents at the other house; as well as to supply the loss which might possibly accrue from any defection then apprehended in his own corps. Offers were accordingly made to Mr. Cooke, of too tempting and persuasive a nature, to be easily resisted; and, thus the town became indebted to Mr. Harris for the acquisition of an actor, who ranks among the very brightest ornaments of the profession. It was on the thirty-first of October 1800 he made his first appearance on the Covent Garden boards in the character of Richard the Third, and made a far more powerful impression on the public than any actor since the debut of Garrick. Expectation had been raised to the highest pitch, from his fame which renown had blazoned abroad: never were interest and curiosity more strongly excited; never was any appearance crowned with more distinguished success. The wonders of his performance flew like wild fire through the city, so that on his next appearance which was in Shylock, the house was crammed full. That season he played Richard fifteen times more, to overflowing houses; and every season afterwards, his Richard continued to be a standing weekly dish, a thing never known before, and which till it actually occurred could not have been believed. Richard had not for many years been attractive: three or four times in one season was the most to which it had been extended with profit; and even so, it was considered as a worn out old stock piece. That it should regularly on each Monday night, for several years, bring full houses at Covent Garden theatre, is a proof of the superlative powers of the actor, which no human argument, however invigorated by genius or animated by spleen, can possibly overturn.

His performance of Shylock was thought to fall very little, if at all, short of that of Macklin. It is pretty remarkable that, in that prostration of mind, and total eclipse of memory, which rendered the last few years of Mr. Macklin's life little better than a childish blank, he frequently spoke of some actor he had seen in a northern company of strollers, who played the character of Shylock to his perfect satisfaction. "By the L—d sir," he would say, "the fellow played it as well as I could." He would then naturally advert to the loss of his memory, and deplore his not being able to tell "the fellow's name." The first night Cooke appeared in Shylock on the Covent Garden boards this writer was in the pit accompanied by one who had been a particular confidential intimate and relation of the deceased veteran; and he immediately said,

"Certainly this is the very actor of whom *old Mac* used to speak so warmly." To Shylock succeeded Iago, Kitely, Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm and others. In all of which he possessed stronger powers of attraction than any actor that has existed within the last thirty years.

That Cooke, as a great and original genius, stands preeminently above all others of his profession now living, will hardly be denied by any one who weighs his merits fairly, and recollects how little he owes to elaborated art, and what a deadly enemy he carries within himself to the full and fair exercise of his talents. So little artificial indeed is there in his acting, that those who have formed their opinions of the profession upon what they have seen done by others, now living, can at first scarcely consider him an actor. In that admirable picture of human life, the novel of Tom Jones, Fielding places Tom Jones and his friend Partridge in the gallery to see the tragedy of Hamlet—Hamlet by Garrick. Partridge, ignorant of the drama, and of the characters of actors, enjoys the whole play, as a mere child of nature: is frightened at the ghost, wonders at Hamlet's venturing to follow it, and so on. The play being over, Jones asks Partridge his opinion of the play, and above all which he thinks the best actor. Why the king to be sure, says Partridge. "The world think differently," returns Jones; "all concur in pronouncing him that played Hamlet the best player in the world." "What! the little man in black?" replies Partridge, confidently; "no, no, dont you think to persuade me to that! why I should have acted just as he did, if I had seen a ghost myself. No, no, he is no actor." In many of his assumed characters, a person as simple as Partridge would be likely to make the same remark on Cooke.

The first time Garrick made his appearance, he boldly struck into the path of nature, bursting from the old beaten road of slow, monotonous singsong drawling. At first the audience could not decide, or indeed imagine what he meant. Truth and nature, however, soon broke forth in a full blaze upon them; and Quin, Ryan, and the whole train of monotonists, sunk from the public eye like the ghosts in Richard. Quin, who was as candid in heart, as coarse in language, when prevailed upon to see him, said, "If he be right, we have been all wrong; and by the L—d I am afraid he is." Something of the same kind of dubious sensation was experienced, we are told, at New York on Cooke's first appearance. After the tedious, monotonous syllabizing, dead march speechifying, to which

this country has hitherto been so much accustomed, the natural acting, and familiar colloquial speech of Cooke, seemed at first strange and new; but being conformable to nature, it stood its ground, and has carried away the crown of laurel.

We have written much, and read more upon Mr. Cooke's professional powers, having admired him extremely from the first time we saw him: but we have not yet met with any thing which for correct and luminous conception, truth, and brilliance of colouring can be put in competition with a critique on his Richard, which lately appeared in a New York paper. To prevent such an exquisite morceau from being buried in an unwieldy file, and mixed with the advertisements and other lumber of a newspaper, and at the same time to offer our readers, (not one in a hundred of whom will have met with it in its original place) a just description, dressed up in language and illustrated with reflections superior to any we can pretend to employ, we extract so much of that critique as relates to our present subject.

"Mr. Cooke's style of acting," says the New York critic, "is vivid, original, and impressive. It is the product of genius, improved and exalted by taste and study. His excellence is drawn altogether from the resources of his own capacious mind. Nature has been by no means lavish in her bounties to the person or voice of this eminent tragedian. His figure is neither majestic nor symmetrically proportioned: his voice, though not deficient in compass, is neither mellow nor varied: his gesticulation is more expressive than elegant: his gait is less distinguished for grace, than ease and freedom; and it may be greatly questioned whether his stage walk is always compatible with the dignity of a hero. In what then, it may be asked, does the wonderful superiority of Cooke consist? We answer, in the force and comprehension of his genius, the boldness and originality of his manner, the significance of his gestures, the astonishing flexibility of his countenance, and the quick and piercing expression of his eye, united to his thorough knowledge, not only of the text, but the meaning of his author. Mr. Cooke, in Richard, differs not more widely from, than he surpasses, every other representative of the part. He not only enters on the threshold of the character, but is absolutely lost in its mazes. In all the diversified humors of the crookbacked tyrant, whether his duplicity is employed in wooing the affections of the fickle Anne; whether his daring ambition is crowned with success or thwarted

by opposing accidents; whether his cool malignant sarcasms are thrown out at the court flies that surround him, or his perturbed spirit wanders in the world of terrible shadows; he uniformly appears, through every change and variety of scene, impregnated with the genius of his author; always impressive, always Richard.

To analyze his acting, is to enter into an enumeration of all his beauties. Our limits will only permit us to notice a few of the most prominent. In his first interview with Lady Anne, the deep dissembling cunning of Richard assumed an air of such perfect sincerity, that it might have deceived a mind less weak and trusting than the one whose credulity he so successfully played upon. In the same scene, where the mock-penitent tyrant demands his death from Anne, Mr. Cooke contrived to throw in the part a wonderful degree of force and expression. When he exclaims,

Nay, do not pause, for I did kill king Henry—

But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.

Nay, now despatch, 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward—

But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

His instantaneous transition from the former to the latter part of each sentence, and his accompanying expressions of ardent attachment, displayed a mind deeply read in the language of genuine passion. The cool and settled malignity of Richard's heart in the sentence

I can smile, and smile, and murder while I smile,

was uttered by Mr. Cooke with admirable effect. And his subsequent adherence to the character which he here gives of himself, proves at once the force of his genius and the strength of his judgment. His affected piety and humility before the lord mayor, and his seeming unwillingness to accept the crown, were finely portrayed. Throughout this scene he not only evinced the deep cunning of a practised villain, but the archness of a fiend. His burst of triumphant exultation at the success of his schemes, the energy of his manner in grasping the hand of Buckingham, and the vehemence with which he threw the prayer-book from him, at the departure of the lord mayor, were highly expressive of the swelling ambition of the proud and aspiring Gloster. Mid the noise and bustle that preceded the battle of Bosworth Field, there was nothing so preeminently conspicuous as the cool, collected and thoughtful manner of Richard. His manner of bidding good night to the

lords Surrey and Norfolk, was truly inimitable. It is in the delicate touches of nature like these, that the comparative excellence of actors can be fairly tested. To catch and embody, as it were, by the combined force of genius and judgment, a concealed beauty that has forever escaped vulgar perception, is the peculiar province and the highest merits of an exalted performer. Mr. Cooke was by no means as successful in the fifth as in the preceding acts. His exclamation on starting from his couch,

Give me another horse—bind up my wounds!
Have mercy Jesu!

were not sufficiently descriptive of the wildness and disorder which, at that moment, haunted the guilty soul of Richard. In this and the following passage, where he exclaims “a thousand hearts are swelling in my breast,” there was less force and vehemence in his manner, than we have been accustomed to witness in the Richard of Cooper, and less, we think, than the character demanded. Upon the whole, however, Mr. Cooke is unquestionably the best representative of the part that has ever appeared on the American boards. It is a character which he has so profoundly studied, so happily conceived, and so masterly delineated, that perhaps, taking it all in all, we shall never witness a performance so replete with beauties, so finished, and so faultless.”

To lament that the efforts of superior genius should be counteracted by great faults and foibles, would perhaps, be to impeach the dispensations of Providence, and to lament that men are men. It was Swift, I believe, who said that a few men of genius (I don't know how many, but certainly not more than four or five), if combined together and true to each other, could control and govern mankind. But that Providence, in order to prevent that mischief, implanted in the nature of such men unextinguishable hatred and hostility to each other. May not something of the same kind be said of men of superior talents, individually? May we not, as a theory at least, suppose that the follies or the vices which are, with so very few exceptions, seen coupled with genius in every department of life, mechanic and scientific, are placed there for the purpose of preventing that undue ascendancy which it might otherwise enable its possessors to obtain over others. Let us then take men as nature or accident, both alike in the directing hands of the Creator, may have moulded them;

Let us make use of the good and overlook the evil: and if in the present instance some blemishes at times break in upon, and for the moment impair the excellence of the actor, let us recollect that they do not destroy it; let us call to mind what a pious and virtuous a man, and as profound a moral philosopher as any that ever lived from the creation of the world to this day, once said of Mr. Fox, and apply it to the present subject. "He has faults; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march, of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great excellence." "What contradictions," says the enlightened *Auber du Maurier*, "often occur in the same person! How often the indulgence of one foible prevents the exertion and the advantage of many good qualities, and many virtues!" This he says by way of exordium to the history of Marshal Rantzau, in his memoirs of Hamburgh. The only failing which can be set off against the great merits of George Frederick Cooke is unfortunately too well known to require particular mention in this place; if it were not, we should not even distantly allude to it; and in adverting to it we have no other object in view but, while recognising the fact, to assure our readers that it happens much seldomer than the foulmouthed tongue of slander has related; that it leaves still a great superabundance of means to please, to delight, and to instruct; and that in a public career of many, many years, it has not yet been able to lower his professional character below the standard of *the first living actor*.

LIFE OF MR. QUICK, THE CELEBRATED COMEDIAN.

Extracted from a London publication.

THIS excellent comedian was born in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, where his father was an eminent brewer. At the age of fourteen, he left his parents for the precarious life of a player, and joined a little strolling company, in the vicinity of London, whose manager was the famous Oliver Carr, who boasted of having taught Garrick* to act, when he first made his appearance at Goodman's Fields.

* It is said that Carr dressed Richard in the same garments which were worn by Garrick on his first appearance in that part at Goodman's Fields. This dress was held by the strollers of his company, in high estimation; and

At Fulham Mr. Quick commenced his theatrical carreer; and, for the first time offered himself to public notice, in the character of Altamont, in the Fair Penitent, which he personified so much to the satisfaction of the manager Mr. Carr, that he desired his wife in the course of the play, to set young Quick down a whole share, which at the close of the farce, amounted to *three shillings*.

In the counties of Kent and Surrey, he figured away, with great success; and before he was eighteen, performed Hamlet, Richard the Third, Romeo, George Barnwell, Jaffier, Tancred, and many other characters, in the higher walks of tragedy. While he was in Kent, he and his brother adventurers made a halt at a country town, and put up at a small alehouse, as their place of residence during their performance. Their appearance however not being much approved of by the landlord, he secured two large trunks which contained the riches of the company, who intended to represent Macbeth on the following day. In the evening they all repaired to the barn to rehearse: at the same time the landlord, being intent upon observing their movements, applied his ear to a crevice in the door, and hearing the song of the assembled witches of, "we'll fly by night," in consternation from fear of losing his bill, exclaimed, to the astonishment of the *weird sisters*, "ay, ay, you villains, you may fly, but I'll be d—d if I hav'nt stopped your boxes."

One night old Carr, the manager, was dressed to perform Hamlet, at Croyden, and the hay loft in which he exhibited contained a door, behind the scenes, which was about ten feet from the ground, and opened over a dunghill that had been made up of a large quantity of human soil. Poor old Carr, who was generally in a state of intoxication, had mistaken this door for one of a better communication, and the first step instantly precipitated him into the filth, where he lay floundering for near an hour.

In a few minutes his presence was necessary to begin the play; but, to the surprise of every one behind the scenes, he was not to be found; there was no suspicion of his having gone out that way. The audience presently became clamorous, and demanded a reason for the delay; when they were immediately informed by a performer, that Mr. Carr had suddenly vanished, and the most in-

as their wardrobe was not overstocked, it was frequently used in comedy as well as tragedy.

distrious search for him had proved unsuccessful; that they had sent to all the public houses in the neighbourhood, but could not hear any tidings of the manager. He then observed, that poor Mrs. Carr, who was to personate the queen, had gone about the scenes to look for her dear husband, and had also vanished, though there was no probable way out, but by the stage door, which had never been left all the evening. This address threw the audience into the utmost consternation and alarm: some persons said, that the players were the children of the devil, and that his black majesty had joined the company, to kick up capers with them: others observed that it was a trick to cheat them out of their money, and not perform.

During this whimsical scene of confusion, however, some of the spectators near the stairs up which they came into the theatre, cried out—a stink! a stink!

This drew the attention of the company to the entrance of the house, when to the astonishment of every one present, up came Hamlet and his wife, completely enveloped in the golden treasure of Cloacina's Temple; and being in the utmost paroxysm of rage at their ill fortune and filthy condition, they pushed through the audience to the stage, regardless of either the clothes of their company, or the delicacy of their olfactory nerves.

As soon as the confusion was a little appeased, old Carr came forward and told the company, that though the queen and himself had been *interred* before their time, he would with their permission begin the play, which he did, to the great entertainment of his rustic auditors; who, through every scene of the tragedy, exhausted their wit and jokes, at the expense of the manager and his company.

During Mr. Quick's theatrical travels, a whimsical dispute took place, at St. Mary Cray in Kent, between him and a brother actor, with respect to which of the two should be the first gravedigger in Hamlet. The contest was carried on, even to the representation before the audience, in which the rivals took their stations opposite to each other in the grave; where to the no small entertainment of the house, they chaunted the same ditty, and repeated the same part. At length, however the good humor of the audience was exhausted; and opinions, concerning the right of choice between the Thespian heroes, were divided. Presently all was confusion and uproar, which at length subsided, on Quick's grappling the skull,

which was a *sheep's head*, together with a *long beef marrow bone*: of these he kept possession until the entrance of Hamlet, whose gravity was not a little disturbed on the occasion.

An arch wag among the spectators, on Hamlet's saying to the skull, "Get thee to my lady's chamber," said, "no, no, send it to little Quick's dressing room."

But to pursue Mr. Quick's professional progress more immediately, it is necessary to observe, that in a few years he greatly distinguished himself as an actor of versatile talents; and his fame having reached Mr. Foote, he was engaged by that gentleman, for some of the minor parts of the drama. In this theatre however, he remained without having an opportunity of showing his talents to advantage, till Mr. Shuter, in June 1766, took an extra benefit, and asked Mr. Quick to perform Mordecai, in *Love-a-la-Mode*. Macklin, who was standing by, immediately encouraged him to take the part, and promised to give instructions with respect to his manner of playing it. When Quick waited on Macklin to receive his instructions, he asked the young comedian whether he knew the *first qualification* of an actor, and immediately gave the precept, which was, *to be able to stand still*.

Quick closely adhered to the advice of his preceptor; and when he personified the Jew, Macklin expressed his high approbation of Quick's exertions, together with a prediction of his future excellence. Woodward and Shuter, who were present, took also particular notice of his performance, and warmly recommended him to Mr. Colman, who that year had become a patentee of Covent Garden theatre, and engaged him. For a season or two, he was the fag of the theatre, and happy to get any of the characters which Woodward, Shuter, and Dunstall, either gave up, or objected to perform. At length an opportunity offered, which at once established Quick's consequence with the manager and the public.

Younger, the prompter had seen him perform Mungo at Canterbury, with great success; and, while arranging with Mr. Colman the performers to represent the Padlock, he recommended Quick in the strongest terms; in consequence of which our young hero got the part instead of Mr. Dyer, to whom Mr. Colman first intended to give Mungo. His personification of the whimsical black procured considerable favour with the public, and laid the foundation of his future fame. The next character in which he displayed his comic powers to advantage, was Tony Lumpkin; and, his assump-

tion of it was not only satisfactory to the public, but the subject of Dr. Goldsmith's continued eulogium.

But the parts, which most completely raised him to the class of our first rate comedians, were Acres, and Isaac Mendoza, in Mr. Sheridan's *Rivals* and *Duenna*. After his personification of these, he obtained a choice of characters, and stood before the public as one of the leading performers of Covent Garden theatre.

He then became joint manager of the Bristol theatre; and, there he married his present wife, who is the daughter of a respectable clergyman of that city; and by whom he has a son and a daughter, who have approached adult life, and who unite considerable accomplishments to personal endowments.

Some years before he left Covent Garden, he undertook the character of Richard the Third for his benefit. It was his intention to make a *serious* attempt; but the public naturally expected a *comic* one; and finding his audience inclined to mirth, he indulged their humor, and gave them a complete burlesque, which met with general laughter and approbation. It is worthy of remark, that in the course of twenty years' professional duty to the public and his manager, he was rarely out of play and farce; and, during that number of years, but two apologies were made to the town on account of his ill health.

In the season of 1798, he felt, with the fatigues of his profession, his constitution very much shaken; and, after performing Major Oakly for Mrs. Mattocks's benefit, in May of the same year, he withdrew from the avocations of the theatre, by medical advice, and retired to Cheltenham, where the salutary waters and change of air restored him to perfect health. Fearful of relapsing into the same indisposed state that the duties of Covent Garden theatre had brought on, he resolved to try the effects of travelling, and accordingly visited, in a professional capacity, Edinburgh, York, Hull, Birmingham, and Liverpool; at all which places his exertions proved very lucrative to him.

In June 1806, he was engaged to perform at Cheltenham; and on his way thither the stage coach was overturned; by which accident his arm was broke; and he was rendered incapable of proceeding on his journey. He is now perfectly recovered, and continues his professional excursions in various parts of England, with the most flattering success. It has been erroneously reported, that Mr. Quick had wholly abandoned the thought of returning to the Lon-

don stage. On inquiry, we find, that whenever overtures are made to him, adequate to the importance of his services, he is ready to resume his public character, on the boards of either of our metropolitan theatres.

In the hands of Mr. Quick, the characters sustained by the late Mr. Parsons and Mr. Suett, would receive an importance to which they have lately been unaccustomed in the hands of Mr. Mathews.

We have already mentioned several characters in which Mr. Quick stands unrivalled as their representative; and, a very long list of others might be enumerated, in which he is equally great: in justice however, to his professional character, we must be permitted to notice him in a few plays. The person of Mr. Quick is happily formed for a comedian: with features beaming with good humor, he has eyes particularly expressive of mirth, and a facetiousness of disposition. His personification of Justice Woodcock, in Love in a Village; Sancho Panza; Sharp, in the Lying Valet; Barnaby Brittle; Doctor, in Animal Magnetism; and a great variety of opposite characters, are still recollected with pleasure; and we hope the unique powers of this excellent comedian will again adorn the boards of one of the winter theatres. If the public should not have that treat, the fault will not rest with Mr. Quick.

MISCELLANY.

ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS OF MASSINGER.

(Continued from page 429 of 2d volume.)

IT was hinted before, that the character of Pisander, in the *Bondman*, is more interesting than that of Sforza. His virtues so unsuitable to the character of a slave, the boldness of his designs, and the steadiness of his courage, excite attention and anxiety in the most powerful manner. He is perfectly consistent, and, though lightly shaded with chivalry, is not deficient in nature or passion. Leosthenes is also the child of nature, whom perhaps we trace in some later jealous characters. Cleora is finely drawn, but to the present age, perhaps, appears rather too masculine: the exhibition of characters which should wear an unalterable charm, in their finest and almost insensible touches, was peculiar to the prophetic genius

of Shakspeare.* Massinger has given a strong proof of his genius, by introducing in a different play a similar character, in a like situation to that of Pisander, yet with sufficient discrimination of manners and incident: I mean Don John, in the *Very Woman*, who like Pisander gains his mistress's heart, under the disguise of a slave. Don John is a model of magnanimity, superior to Cato, because he is free from pedantry and ostentation. I believe he may be regarded as an original character. It was easy to interest our feelings for all the characters already described; but no writer, before Massinger, had attempted to make a player the hero of tragedy. This, however, he has executed, with surprising address, in the *Roman Actor*. It must be confessed that Paris, the actor, owes much of his dignity to incidents: at the opening of the play, he defends his profession successfully before the senate. This artful introduction raises him, in our ideas, above the level of his situation; for the poet has "graced him with all the power of words:" the impressed passion for him places him in a still more distinguished light, and he meets death from the hands of the emperor himself in a mock play. It is, perhaps, from a sensation of the difficulty of exalting Paris's character, and of the dexterity requisite to fix the attention of the audience on it, that Massinger says, in the dedication of this play, that "he ever held it the most perfect birth of his Minerva." I know not whether it is owing to design, or to want of art, that Romont, in the *Fatal Dowry*, interests us as much as Charalois, the hero. If Charalois surrenders his liberty to procure funeral rites for his father, Romont previously provokes the court to imprison him, by speaking with too much animation in the cause of his friend. Romont, though insulted by Charalois, who discredits his report of Beaumette's infidelity, flies to him with all the eagerness of attachment, when Charalois is involved in difficulties by the murder of Novall and his wife; and avenges his death, when he is assassinated by Pontalier. Rowe, who neglected the finest parts of this tragedy in his plagiarism, (the Fair Penitent), has not failed to copy the fault I have pointed out. His Horatio is a much finer character than his Altamont; yet he is but a puppet when compar-

* If Massinger formed the singular character of Sir Giles Overreach from his own imagination, what should we think of his sagacity, who have seen this poetical phantom realized in our days? Its apparent extravagance required this support.

ed with Massinger's Romont. Cameola, *The Maid of Honour*, is a most delightful character; her fidelity, generosity, dignity of manners, and elevation of sentiments are finely displayed, and nobly sustained throughout. It is pity that the poet thought himself obliged to debase all the other characters in the piece in order to exalt her. There is an admirable portrait of old Malefort, in that extravagant composition, *The Unnatural Combat*. The poet seems to equal the art of the writer whom he here imitates:

I have known him
From his first youth, but never yet observed,
In all the passages of his life and fortunes,
Virtues so mix'd with vices: valiant the world speaks him,
But with that, bloody; liberal in his gifts too,
But to maintain his prodigal expense,
A fierce extortioner.—Act 3. sc. 2.

Almira and Cardenes, in the *Very Woman*, are copied from nature, and therefore never obsolete. They appear like many favourite characters in our present comedy, amiable in their tempers, and warm in their attachments, but capricious and impatient of control. Massinger, with unusual charity, has introduced a physician in a respectable point of view, in this play. We are agreeably interested in Durazzo,* who has all the good nature of Terence's Micio, with more spirit. His picture of country sport may be viewed with delight even by those who might not relish the reality:

Rise before the sun,
Then make a breakfast of the morning dew,
Served up by nature on some grassy hill;
You'll find it nectar.

In the *City Madam*, we are presented with the character of a finished hypocrite, but so artfully drawn, that he appears to be rather governed by external circumstances, to which he adapts himself, than to act, like Moliere's Tartuffe, from a formal system of wickedness. His humility and benevolence, while he appears as a ruined man, and as his brother's servant, are evidently produced by the presence of his misfortunes; and he discovers a tameness, amidst the insults of his relations, that indicates an inherent baseness of disposition.† When he is informed that his brother has re-

* *The Guardian.*

† See particularly his soliloquy, Act 3. sc. 2.

tired from the world, and has left him his immense fortune, he seems at first to apprehend a deception.

O my good lord!
 This heap of wealth which you possess me of,
 Which to a worldly man had been a blessing,
 And to the messenger might with justice challenge
 A kind of adoration, is to me
 A curse I cannot thank you for; and much less
 Rejoice in that tranquillity of mind
 My brother's vows must purchase. I have made
 A dear exchange with him: he now enjoys
 My peace and poverty, the trouble of
 His wealth conferr'd on me, and that a burthen
 Too heavy for my weak shoulders.—Act 3. sc. 2.

On receiving the will, he begins to promise unbounded lenity to his servants, and makes professions and promises to the ladies who used him so cruelly in his adversity, which appear at last to be ironical, though they take them to be sincere. He does not display himself till he has visited his wealth; the sight of which dazzles and astonishes him so far as to throw him off his guard, and to render him insolent. Massinger displays a knowledge of man not very usual with dramatic writers, while he represents the same person as prodigal of a small fortune in his youth, servile and hypocritical in his distresses, arbitrary and rapacious in the possession of wealth suddenly acquired: for those seeming changes of character depend on the same disposition variously influenced; I mean, on a base and feeble mind, incapable of resisting the power of external circumstances. In order, however, to prepare us for the extravagance of this character, after he is enriched, the poet delineates his excessive transports on viewing his wealth in a speech which cannot be injured by a comparison with any soliloquy in our language:

'Twas no fantastic object, but a truth,
 A real truth; nor dream: I did not slumber,
 And could wake ever with a brooding eye
 To gaze upon't! It did endure the touch,
 I saw and felt it! yet what I beheld
 And handled oft, did so transcend belief,
 (My wonder and astonishment pass'd o'er,)
 I faintly could give credit to my senses.
 Thou dumb magician, [taking out a key], that without a charm,

Didst make my entrance easy, to possess
 What wise men wish and toil for! Hermes' moly,
 Sibylla's golden bough, the great elixir,
 Imagin'd only by the alchemist,
 Compared with thee are shadows,—thou the substance,
 And guardian of felicity! No marvel,
 My brother made thy place of rest his bosom,
 Thou being the keeper of his heart, a mistress
 To be hugg'd ever! In by-corners of
 This sacred room, silver in bags heap'd up
 Like billets sawed and ready for the fire,
 Unworthy to hold fellowship with bright gold
 That flowed about the room, conceal'd itself.
 There needs no artificial light; the splendor
 Makes a perpetual day there, night and darkness
 By that still burning lamp forever banish'd!
 But when guided by that, my eyes had made
 Discovery of the caskets, and they open'd,
Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth
A pyramid of flames, and in the roof
Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place
Heaven's abstract or epitome! rubies, sapphires,
 And ropes of oriental pearl; these seen, I could not
 But look on gold with contempt. And yet I found,
 What weak credulity could have no faith in,
 A treasure far exceeding these: here lay
 A manor bound fast in a skin of parchment,
 The wax continuing hard, the acres melting;
 Here a sure deed of gift for a market town
 If not redeem'd this day, which is not in
 The unthrift's power: there being scarce one shire
 In Wales or England, where my moneys are not
 Lent out at usury, the certain hook
 To draw in more. I am sublimed! gross earth
 Supports me not; I walk on air!—Who's there?

(Enter lord Lacy, with Sir John Frugal, Sir Maurice Lacy, and Plenty, disguised as Indians).

Thieves! raise the street! thieves!—Act 3. sc. 3.

It was a great effort by which such a train of violent emotions and beautiful images were drawn, with the strictest propriety, from the indulgence of a passion to which other poets can only give interest in its anxieties and disappointments. Every sentiment in this fine soliloquy, is touched with the hand of a master; the speaker, overcome by the splendor of his acquisition, can scarcely

persuade himself that the event is real: "It is no fantasy, but a truth; a real truth, no dream; he does not slumber;" the natural language of one who strives to convince himself that he is fortunate beyond all probable expectation; for, "he could wake ever to gaze upon his treasure." Again he reverts to his assurances: "it did endure the touch; he saw and felt it." These broken exclamations and anxious repetitions are the pure voice of nature. Recovering from his astonishment, his mind dilates with the value of his possessions; and the poet finely directs the whole gratitude of this mean character to the key of his stores. In the description which follows, there is a striking climax in sordid luxury. That passage where

Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth
A pyramid of flames, and in the roof
Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place
Heaven's abstract, or epitome!

though founded on a false idea in natural history, long since exploded, is amply excused by the singular and beautiful image which it presents. The contemplation of his enormous wealth, still amplified by his fancy, transports him at length to a degree of frenzy; and now seeing strangers approach, he cannot conceive them to come upon any design but that of robbing him; and with the appeasing of his ridiculous alarm this storm of passion subsides, which stands unrivalled in its kind, in dramatic history. The soliloquy possesses a very uncommon beauty, that of forcible description united with passion and character. I should scarcely hesitate to prefer the description of Sir John Frugal's countinghouse to Spenser's house of riches.

It is very remarkable, that in this passage, the versification is so exact, (two lines only excepted), and the diction so pure and elegant, that, although much more than a century has elapsed since it was written, it would be perhaps impossible to alter the measure or language without injury, and certainly very difficult to produce an equal length of blank verse, from any modern poet, which should bear a comparison with Massinger's, even in the mechanical part of its construction. This observation may be extended to all our poet's productions: majesty, elegance, and sweetness of diction predominate in them. It is needless to quote any single passage for proof of this, because none of those which I am going to intro-

duce will afford any exception to the remark. Independent of character, the writings of this great poet abound with noble passages. It is only in the productions of true poetical genius that we meet with successful allusions to sublime natural objects. The attempts of an inferior writer, in this kind, are either borrowed or disgusting. If Massinger were to be tried by this rule alone, we must rank him very high. A few instances will prove this. Theophilus, speaking of Diocletian's arrival, says

The marches of great princes,
Like to the motions of prodigious meteors,
Are step by step observed.—*Virgin Martyr*, act 1. sc. 1.

The introductory circumstances of a threatening piece of intelligence, are

But creeping billows,
Not got to shore yet.—*Id. act 2. sc. 2.*

In the same play, we meet with this charming image, applied to a modest young nobleman:

The sunbeams which the emperor throws upon him,
Shine there but as in water, and gild him
Not with one spot of pride.—*Id. sc. 3.*

No other figure could so happily illustrate the peace and purity of an ingenuous mind, uncorrupted by favour. Massinger seems fond of this thought. We meet with a similar one in the *Guardian*.

I have seen those eyes with pleasant glances play
Upon Adorio's, like Phoebe's shine,
Gilding a crystal river.—*Act 4. sc. 1.*

There are two parallel passages in Shakspeare, to whom we are probably indebted for this, as well as for many other fine images of our poet. The first is in the *Winter's Tale*:

He says he loves my daughter;
I think so too; for never gaz'd the moon
Upon the water, as he'll stand and read,
As 'twere, my daughter's eyes.—*Act 4. sc. 4.*

The second is ludicrous:

King. Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars to shine
(Those clouds remov'd), upon our wat'ry eyne.

Ras. O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.

Love's Labour's Lost, act 5. sc. 2.

The following images are applied, I think in a new manner:

As the sun

Thou did'st rise gloriously, kept'st a constant course
In all thy journey; and now, in the evening,
When thou should'st pass with honour to thy rest,
Wilt thou fall like a meteor?—Virgin Martyr, act 5. sc. 2.

O summer friendship,

Whose flattering leaves that shadow'd us in our
Prosperity, with the least gust drop off
In the autumn of adversity.—Maid of Honour, act 3. sc. 1.

In the last quoted play, Cameola says, in perplexity,

What a sea
Of melting ice I walk on!—Act 3. sc. 4.

A very noble figure, in the following passage, seems to be borrowed from Shakspeare:

What a bridge
Of glass I walk upon, over a river
Of certain ruin, *mine own weighty fears*
Cracking what should support me!

The Bondman, act 4. sc. 3.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous;
As full of peril and advent'rous spirit
As to o'er-walk a current, roaring loud,
On the unsteady footing of a spear.

Henry 4, part 1. act 1. sc. 3.

It cannot be denied that Massinger has improved on his original: he cannot be said to borrow, so properly as to imitate. This remark may be applied to many other passages: thus Harpax's menace,

I'll take thee,—and hang thee
In a contorted chain of icicles
In the frigid zone.—The Virgin Martyr, act 5. sc. 1.

Is derived from the same source with that passage in *Measure for Measure*, where it is said to be a punishment in a future state,

To reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.

Again, in the *Old Law*, we meet with a passage similar to a much celebrated one of Shakspeare's, but copied with no common hand:

In my youth
I was a soldier, no coward in my age;
I never turn'd my back upon my foe;
I have felt nature's winters, sicknesses,
Yet ever kept a lively sap in me
To greet the cheerful spring of health again.

Act 1. sc. 1.

Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood;
Nor did I with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly.*—As you Like It, act 2. sc. 3.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL RANTZAU.

MARSHAL RANTZAU.—“He was a German of high birth, and a general of such great note, that Mazarin used to oppose him to the prince of Condé, when that great commander had the misfortune to be in arms against his country and his prince.” M. Rantzau possessed admirable qualities both of body and mind. He was tall, fair, and very handsome. To see him only, one would say he was born to command. He was the finest horseman ever beheld. He would hit a single piece of money with a pistol, at a hundred paces distant. He was invincible with the small sword. He spoke the principal languages of Europe, and had a general taste for the sciences. He was acquainted with all the great generals of the age; having made war under them from the time he was able to

* In an expression of Archidamas, in the *Bondman*, we discover, perhaps, the origin of an image in *Paradise Lost*:

O'er our heads, with sail-stretch'd wings,
Destruction hovers.—The Bondman, act 1. sc. 3.

Milton says of Satan,

His sail broad vanns
* He spreads for flight.

bear arms. He said in conversation many lively things; and as an infallible proof of the force of his eloquence, in any council of war in which he ever sat, he always drew over the other members to be of his sentiments; so ably did he support them with powerful reasons. If he spoke well, he wrote still better. To his courage nothing was impossible. He possessed perfect coolness in the greatest danger, and found expedients under the heaviest misfortunes. His liberality procured him the love and esteem of his soldiers, and no general knew how to give his orders so well. But so many excellent and rare virtues were effaced by his great vices. Never was there a more determined debauchee. He loved wine and women to excess; and the most seasoned drinkers were afraid of him. He sought their company from all parts, and no one could equal him in this species of vice. He sometimes remained in a state of insensibility for whole days. The disorder that reigned in his private affairs was inconceivable. He gave away whatever he had about him without discrimination; and he always had much money in his pocket, which he was robbed of during his inebriety. Thus, like a cask without a bottom, all the riches of India would not have been sufficient for him; and he found himself compelled to sell all his effects for little or nothing. He often lost his best friends for a bon-mot. Du Maurier, who was Ranzau's great friend, told this extraordinary man one day, that his excesses and irregularities would destroy his health; and that they would prevent his rising to the principal employments in the state. "I would not," answered he, darting a most ferocious and hagard look upon Du Maurier, "I would not give up my pleasures to become emperor of Germany." His excesses, during the siege of Dunkirk by the Spaniards, are thought to have lost that place. He was, however, confined for some time in the castle of Vincennes for this supposed neglect, and was cleared from any imputation of treachery or cowardice. He died soon after his release. During the siege of Gravelines he one day appointed the duke of Orleans, and some of the principal French nobility, to sup with him. He went, however, in the morning, to pay a visit to the famous Dutch admiral Van Tromp, where he got so drunk with Malaga wine, that he fell under the table as if he was dead, and was obliged to be put to bed. His aid-du-camp made an apology to the duke of Orleans, for his master's not being able to attend him at supper, and put it upon an excessive swell of the sea, which had prevented his leaving the admiral's ship.

To show the dangers of ebriety, the catholic legends tell us of some of their hermits to whom the devil gave his choice of three crimes: two of them of the most atrocious kind; and the other to be drunk. The poor saint chose the last, as the least of the three; but when drunk, committed the other two.

The baneful effects of this pernicious vice upon the body are described by Dr. Darwin, in his "Zoonomia," under an allegory which would not have disgraced the splendid imagination of lord Bacon himself.

"Prometheus," says the doctor, "was painted, as stealing fire from heaven, that might well represent the inflammable spirit, produced by fermentation, which may be said to animate or enliven the man of clay; whence the conquests of Bacchus, as well as the temporary mirth and noise of his devotees. But, the after punishment of those who steal this accursed fire, is a vulture gnawing the liver; and well allegorizes the poor inebriate, lingering for years under painful diseases."

And, that the graces and energies of poetry may come in aid of the figure, so strongly depicted in prose; the same great physiologist, in his "Botanic Garden," in the most sublime imagery, and with the greatest strength of personification, has composed a picture, which should be painted and hung up in every chamber dedicated to Bacchanalian festivity.

Dr. Darwin personifies the goddess of wine, under the name of Vitis, who thus addresses her votaries,

"Drink deep, sweet youth," seductive Vitis cries,
The maudlin teardrop glistening in her eyes;
Green leaves and purple clusters crown her head,
And the tall thyrsus stays her tott'ring tread:
" Drink deep," she carols as she waves in air
The mantling goblet, " and forget your care."
O'er the dread feast malignant Chymia scowls,
And mingle poison in the nectar'd bowls.
Fell Gout peeps grinning thro' the flimsy scene,
And bloated Dropsy keeps behind unseen.
Wrapp'd in her robe, while Lepra hides her stains,
And silent Frenzy, writhing, bites his chains.

A CURIOUS LETTER FROM YATES THE CELEBRATED COMEDIAN,
TO THE EDITOR OF A BRITISH PUBLICATION.

SIR,

THOUGH it is not my profession to write, but to retail the writings of others, yet I find the spirit move me to hazard some observations, on a very goodhumored, sprightly, elegant paragraph, in your paper of yesterday.

The facetious gentleman is pleased to say, that *Yates and his wife* have retired from the stage, with thirty-six thousand pound, or forty thousand pound; and that they are remarkable for their *comely* appearance; though one is, from theatrical dates, seventy, the other above sixty years of age. 'Tis wonderful, so wise a man should be mistaken, but the facts are,

They have not retired with 40,000*l.*

They have not retired *at all*.

Theatrical dates *do not* prove them to be, the one seventy, the other more than sixty years of age.

In respect to myself; that I am remarkable for my *comely* appearance; that I can, though not worth *quite* forty thousand pound, eat my mutton without an engagement, and yet owe no man any thing; are offences to which I am ready to plead guilty: if comeliness is a sin, heaven help me, I say! and as to owing no man any thing, in these days, when it is the gentlest thing in the world, to *pay* no man any thing, I must e'en stand trial before a jury of honest tradesmen, who I dare say will acquit me, from the singularity of the case.

In respect to theatrical dates, I have, to be sure, told the chimes at midnight, some five and thirty years ago, which as I find myself just as healthy and alert, as in those delightful days, I do not think at all disqualifies me for my general cast of characters, in which I have pleased as good judges as your correspondent; nor is it absolutely necessary that the Miser, Fondlewife, Gomez, Don Manuel, Sir Wilful Witwou'd, &c. &c. should have the first down of a beard on their chins; but I will whisper something in the gentleman's ear, that whilst such writers as he are allowed to assassinate honest people in the dark, by abusive anonymous paragraphs, nobody that has mutton to eat will look out for theatrical engagements, but quietly let the stage fall into that happy state,

"When one Egyptian darkness covers all."

So much for myself, and now for Mrs. Yates.

That she is a pretty enough actress, as times go, and by no means uncomely, I willingly allow; but that she is more than sixty, or will be these dozen years at least, may bear something of a doubt.

As her first appearance was on Drury Lane stage, and in the full meridian of its glory, the date is easily ascertained; but to save the gentleman trouble, as he seems to be a bad calculator, I will inform him, it was in Mr. Crisp's *Virginia*, in the year 1754, (twenty-nine years ago), and that she was then as pretty a plump rosy Hebe, as one shall see on a summer's day.

She had the honour (an honour never conferred on any other person), of being introduced, as a young beginner by a prologue written, and spoken, by that *great master*, *Mr. Garrick*, in which the following lines are to the present purpose:

“ If novelties can please, to night we've two—
Tho' English both, yet spare 'em as they're new—
To one at least, your usual favour show—
A female asks it; can a man say No?
Should you indulge our novice yet unseen,
And crown her with your hands a tragic queen:
Should you with smiles a confidence impart,
To calm those fears which speak a feeling heart,
Assist each struggle of ingenuous shame,
Which curbs a genius in its road to fame;
With one wish more her whole ambition ends—
She hopes some merit, to deserve such friends.”

And now give me leave, Sir, to tell your correspondent a story: On the first coming to England of Signor Trebbi, a worthy gentleman, the editor of a newspaper paid him a morning visit, and informed him, he was a public writer, and had characters of all prices. “ I understand you, Sir,” said Trebbi, “ and have heard of you: I have no guineas to throw away so ill; but I am a writer too; Et voila ma plume!” “ This is my pen,” showing him a good English oaken towel. Signor Trebbi was so good as to leave me *his pen*, the only one I shall make use of against malevolence in future, where the writer does me the honour of making himself known to me. I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

RICHARD YATES.

CHARACTER OF FOOTE, BY MR. GAHAGAN.

FOOTE was a very extraordinary man, and had talents which he abused. He abounded in wit, humor and sense; but he was so fond of detraction and mimicking, that he might properly be called a buffoon; and they were a great blemish in his conversation, though he entertained you. He was generally civil to your face, and seldom put you out of humor with yourself; but you paid for his civility the moment you turned your back, and were sure of being made ridiculous. He was not so malignant as some I have known, but his excessive vanity led him into satire and ridicule. He was vain of his classical knowledge (which was but superficial) and of his family, and used to boast of his numerous relations in the west of England. He was most extravagant and baubling, but not generous. He delighted in buying rings, snuffboxes, and toys, which were a great expense to him; and he lost money at play, and was a dupe, with all his parts. He loved wine, and good living, and was a mighty pretender to skill in cookery, though he did not understand a table as well as he thought; he affected to like distinguished dishes and ragouts, and could not bear to eat plain beef or mutton, which showed he had a depraved appetite; he spared no expense in his dinners, and his wine was good. He was very disgusting in his manner of eating, and not clean in his person; but he was so pleasant, and had such a flow of spirits, that his faults and foibles were overlooked. He always took the lead in company, and was the chief or sole performer. He had such a rage for shining, and such an itch for applause, that he often brought to my mind Pope's lines on the duke of Wharton:

“Though senates hung on all he spoke
The mob must hail him master of the joke.”

He loved lords' company, though he gave himself airs of despising them, and treating them cavalierly. He was licentious and sensual, made a jest of religion and morality, and of all worthy men. He told a story pleasantly, and added many circumstances of his own invention, to heighten it. He had a good choice of words, and apt expressions, and could speak very well upon grave subjects; but he soon grew tired of serious conversation, and returned naturally to his favourite amusement, mimicry, in which he did not excel; for he drew caricatures by which he made you

laugh more than a closer mimic. He was a coarse actor, yet he played the parts in his own plays, better than any who have appeared in them since his death; for instance, *Major Sturgeon, Aircastle, Cadwallader, &c.*

He had a flat vulgar face, without expression; but when a part was strongly ridiculous, he succeeded, for he always ran into farce; so that I have been often surfeited with him on the stage, and never wished to see him twice, in the same character. Though he wanted simplicity in his acting, yet he was a very good judge of the stage; but so unfair, and so disposed to criticise, that you could not depend on his opinion.

As a writer he certainly had merit, and afforded great entertainment to the town for many years. If he had taken more pains in finishing his pieces, they would have been equal to most of our comedies; but he was too indolent, and too idle, to carry them to perfection.

Upon the whole, his life and character would furnish a subject for a good farce, with an instructive moral. It would show that parts alone are of little use, without prudence or virtue: and that flashes of wit and humor, give only a momentary pleasure; but no solid entertainment.

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

For January, 1811.

1 Tuesday 1st,	Columbus, with the Prisoner at Large.
2 Wednesday 2d,	Cure for the Heart Ache, and Raising of the Wind, (for the benefit of the sufferers at Charleston.)
3 Friday 4th,	Stranger, and Tom Thumb.
4 Saturday 5th,	Columbus, and Deaf Lover.
5 Monday 7th,	School for Scandal, and the Prize.
6 Wednesday 9th,	Julia, or the Italian Lover, and Hit or Miss.
7 Friday 11th,	Hamlet, and the Ghost.
8 Saturday 12th,	Columbus, and Who's the Dupe?
9 Monday 14th,	Venice Preserved, with Catharine and Petruchio.
10 Wednesday 16th,	Roman Father, with Ways and Means.
11 Friday 18th,	The Revenge, and the Blind Boy.
12 Saturday 19th,	Foundling of the Forest, with My Grandmother.
13 Monday 21st,	King Lear, and Catch him Who Can.
14 Wednesday 23d,	Douglas, with Sylvester Daggerwood and Hunter of the Alps.
15 Friday 25th,	Provoked Husband, and Love laughs at Locksmiths.
16 Saturday 26th,	Columbus, and the Weathercock.
17 Monday 28th,	Macbeth, and the Spoil'd Child.
18 Wednesday 30th,	Pizarro, and Budget of Blunders.

MRS. BEAUMONT'S PERFORMANCE CONTINUED.

THE GRECIAN DAUGHTER.

THE tragedy of the Grecian Daughter has, from its first appearance on the stage, had more success, and received stronger marks of public approbation than some plays which better deserve them. Closet criticism, however, has treated it with more rigid justice than the auditors at the playhouse, and made the author refund a part of the surplus of credit which his play received on the stage. That, in common with all Mr. Murphy's dramatic pieces, it has weighty, sterling merit; that it is replete with poetical beauties, couched in language bold, animated, and energetic, yet suffi-

ciently smooth and mellifluous; and that the pathetic, the martial, and the heroic are skilfully blended in the general texture of the action, cannot be denied. But in the appropriation of their several qualities to the leading characters of the piece, there is a transposition contrary to the usual course of nature, for which it is difficult to account, when we consider that Mr. Murphy was no less remarkable for a refined taste and a severe judgment, than for the comprehensive power and versatility of his genius. If it was his object to evince his skill in executing difficulties, to show how far genius could reconcile incongruities, and to give an imposing air of probability to incidents, which, though they should have happened, are so much out of the course of human things, that they must be considered as exceptions to nature's general march, Mr. Murphy has certainly succeeded to admiration.

For our own parts, we are free to avow, that the tragedy of the Grecian Daughter never had charms for us: for even when it was supported by the matchless excellence of the celebrated BARRY in Evander; in which character he was, as Murphy says, "the finest feeble venerable old man that imagination can figure to itself," and of Mrs. Barry, in Euphrasia, there was something in it with which we could not bring our feelings to correspond. Nor was this repugnance the result of critical judgment (for it was in our boyish days) but of natural feeling, which, in such cases, generally precedes the decisions of the understanding, and very much exceeds them in value. In the present instance, we have found the sentence of our youthful feelings confirmed by the decision of our maturer judgment, which, at the same time, enables us to account for opinions we were then not capable nor indeed desirous to analyze.

The fact is, that the tale, upon which the Grecian Daughter is founded, though it be popular, and, in its proper place, sufficiently affecting, and though it were even true in point of fact, has so much the air of those ancient cock-and-a-bull stories, with which old-women relieve the tedium of long winter evenings, or amuse children, that we could not help revolting from it as a subject for tragedy. A nursery tale is but a sorry subject for heroics; and that may surely be called a nursery business of which the principal male character is placed, even in the important and pathetic circumstance on which the plot hinges, in the state of a newly born infant; while on the other hand the heroine, to whom all the timid delicacies, all "the winning softness of the sex," and all the feminine ten-

dernes should belong, is made to usurp the man's office, and to do an act which the boldest ruffian ought to shudder but to think of.

But while natural sentiment revolts from these two incidents, critical judgment confesses its astonishment at the conduct and general execution of the whole drama; for assuredly nothing but the most masterly execution could, on such a fable, have raised a fabric to the high rank which this tragedy holds as an acting play. The filial piety of Euphrasia is emphatically marked through every line of her character. In her refusing to accompany a beloved husband, ("her brave and generous PHOCION") and her blooming boy, in their flight, and staying behind them at Syracuse to attend her father,

" To watch his fate, to visit his affliction,
To cheer his prison hours, and with the tear
Of filial virtue bid e'en bondage smile."

In her tending that father; in her struggles to beguile the rage of Dionysius, by "casting o'er her sorrows a dawn of gladness," and in her hazardous enterprises to save her parent and destroy the tyrant, the author has exerted himself with such force and skill, that it would seem as if he was aware of the ticklish nature of the story he had adopted, and had resolved to bring the character of Euphrasia home to the heart with such an abundance of loftiness, and such a multiplicity of splendid and dignified circumstances, as could not fail to blend down, and secure from too curious and undivided attention, the littleness of the main incident. Mr. Murphy well knew that the world held in the very first rank of approbation the charms of filial piety, and judiciously trusted to it for the success of his work. How irresistibly has he made Euphrasia lay claim to admiration and sympathy in the following lines.

" Till that sad close of all, the task be mine
To tend a father with delighted care,
To smooth the pillow of declining age,
See him sink gradual into mere decay,
On the last verge of life watch every look,
Explode each fond unutterable wish,
Catch his last breath, and close his eyes in peace."

So intent is the author upon making a deep impression of his heroine's filial piety, that in almost every speech she utters, re-

currence is made to her father as the leading, if not exclusive object of her thoughts. Even to the tyrant she says,

" O let me then, in mercy, let me seek
The gloomy mansion where my father dwells:
I die content, if in his arms I perish."

And again,

" Oh while yet he lives,
Indulge a daughter's love; worn out with age,
Soon must he seal his eyes in endless night,
And with his converse charm my ear no more."

On the other hand, the general merit of the poetry is here and there lessened by bloated speeches " full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," and by declamation, pompous enough to excite a smile. Euphrasia's frequent addresses to her VIRGINS too, we remember to have originally occasioned a titter among the gods in Dublin, even when the words were uttered by Mrs. Barry; for whose performance of the character, Garrick made her a present of a farce he had just then written, called " The Irish Widow." Mr. Murphy records this in his life of Garrick, and says that Mrs. Barry " towered above herself in Euphrasia," then candidly ascribes the uncommon success of the play to the performance of her and her husband, and adds, " It is owing to Mrs. SIDDONS that the Grecian Daughter has not sunk into oblivion: she restored it to the stage, in nothing inferior to Mrs. BARRY, and in some scenes superior."

Though Mr. Murphy has pretty generally sacrificed the other characters to the glories of Euphrasia, they are not all without some valuable speeches. The description given by Dionysius of the miseries attendant upon sovereignty is alike forcible and true; and enough to deter any, but the devoted of God, from the thorny paths of ambition and tyranny.

Oh! Philotas,

Thou little know'st the cares, the pangs of empire.
The ermined pride, the purple that adorns
A conqueror's breast, but serves, my friend, to hide
A heart that's torn, that's mangled with remorse.
Each object round me wakens horrid doubts;
The flattering train, the sentinel that guards me,
The slave that waits, all give some new alarm;
And from the means of safety, dangers rise.
E'en victory itself plants anguish here;
And round my laurels the fell serpent twines.

In the character of Euphrasia, Mrs. BEAUMONT made a more successful appeal to the judgment of her audience than in Isabella, and indeed to their feelings also, deserving, as she received, much more unalloyed applause. There being less whining and more energy in the character, it was in itself more agreeable to the audience, and afforded her fewer occasions of falling into the *sing-song ditty-drawl speechification* that so wofully disfigures modern scenic representation, and is one of the faults which detract from Mrs. Beaumont's general powers of impression. In the Grecian Daughter there was less of overacting; less uncouth motion of the head; less, indeed much less, of objectionable action; and at the same time, a more constant and far more perfect display of powerful natural talent. On the former occasion we hazarded an assertion, that tenderness and pathos constituted Mrs. Beaumont's forte: not meaning to resign that opinion, we must say that they do not *exclusively* form her excellence. We scarcely know a feature in the character of Euphrasia which she did not occasionally delineate with success. Her tenderness was mixed with dignity: it was of a higher order, more lovely and more decorous than that of her Isabella. Her grief was more impressive and alarming, while her indignation (the great moving principle upon which the catastrophe of the tragedy turns) was by no means deficient in awfulness. No one can understand the author's design better. Every line, therefore, (with some inconsiderable exceptions) told; and her business, particularly in the scene when she stabs the tyrant, was excellent. In fine, Mrs. Beaumont, in Euphrasia, though not a Barry or a Siddons, is much better than any actress we have a chance of seeing on this side of the Atlantic, unless the example of Cooke shall have infected one or two of the first actresses in England with the itch of migration. The epilogue was delivered with force and spirit; but with a little too much of the latter, and too much action and locomotion. Mrs. Beaumont frequently reminded us, this evening, of Mrs. Whitlock.

In Evander, WARREN was, altogether, respectable: in some passages he displayed considerable pathos. His figure, however, is rather against him for this old Grecian; when he pathetically enough said

Oh! my heart,
Alas! quite worn; worn out with misery;
Oh! weak, decayed old man!

we could not help thinking that "*he did not quite look the thing.*"

Philotas is not enough for Wood. But he made the most of it.

For such characters as Dionysius M'KENZIE seems formed. The merit of understanding his author (and a great and rare one it is) criticism has not often cause to deny to Mr. M'Kenzie. The tyrant of Syracuse he conceives well, and executes as well as he conceives. The terrors of his deep and hollow voice, which, in such characters as this, are peculiarly useful to him, unfit him for the personification of others, for which he has a sufficiency of other requisites.

The Highland Reel followed; in which Jefferson did much more justice to Shelly than in the Sultan he did to Osmyn.

Looking over our journal, we find that the next character in which Mrs. Beaumont offers herself for critical examination, is that of Madam Clermont, in *Adrian and Orrilla*, or a *Mother's Vengeance*.

Of Mrs. Beaumont's Madam Clermont we had heard much in praise from persons on whose judgment we placed much reliance; and we confess that we were not disappointed. In one place excepted, we did not remark the least of that extravagant action, to which we so much regret our being obliged to advert. This play has been so often acted, and every line and character of it is by this time so familiar to the public, that it would be a waste of time and print to enter into an analysis of it, or to speak of the actors, of whom we have already said all that it is needful to say. Mrs. Wood lost, in the revolutions of the past recess, nothing of her interest and charms in Orrilla.

To the play succeeded the old afterpiece of the Citizen, written by Arthur Murphy, the author of the Grecian Daughter, &c., and now brought forward to exhibit Mrs. Beaumont in the lively character of Maria; in which she proved that she possesses a rich vein of comic humor, independent of grimace and buffoonery; bad habits, for which our popular comedians, with few exceptions, stand in the heavy censure of criticism. In Maria she was really comical; and in her management of the trick played off on young Philpot, to deter him from marrying her, did her business with skill. Jefferson was as usual *extravagantly* funny in the young citizen; and Warren, in the old father, by being much more chaste, was more truly comic than either of them.

Indisposition, to our great regret as well as pain, prevented us from seeing Mrs. Beaumont in Letitia Hardy, in the Belle's Stratagem. From several quarters, however, we learned, and it costs us nothing to believe it, that the sprightly Belle was indebted to her for many beauties. In Ella Rosenberg, however, which she played after Letitia, the praise bestowed upon her performance is much more absolute and unmixed. It has been represented as a *chef-d'œuvre* of histrionism. Our informants we know are warm admirers of Mrs. Beaumont's acting: yet we confide in their assertion. Upon the same authority we rely so much, that we venture to affirm (*on sight unseen* as they say) that much also may be said in praise of Warren's Hardy.

We must here drop Mrs. Beaumont till our next number, in order to announce that the managers have in rehearsal two new pieces: one a new comedy, called "The DOUBTFUL SON," the other a tragedy, intitled "DE MONFORT." As an analysis of a new piece must be more pleasing and useful to readers before than after representation, we employ the first means that present themselves of giving a short account of these two productions, and first of the comedy of

THE DOUBTFUL SON.

Mr. Diamond, to whom the public already stand indebted for several dramatic productions, viz. "The Hero of the North," "The Hunter of the Alps," "Adrian and Orrilla," and "The Foundling of the Forest," is the author of this piece, which was, for the first time, performed during the last summer at the Hay-market theatre in London. The plot is briefly as follows.

Alfonso, marquis of Lerida, a high Spanish nobleman, having at a very early age married Victoria, the only child and heiress of an ancient, opulent, and noble family of Spain, had in a short time after their nuptials gone off to South America, to take upon him the office of governor of Mexico, to which he had been then recently appointed, and left his wife, the marchioness, behind him in a state of pregnancy. It appears from circumstances disclosed in the play, that a considerable time antecedent to her union with the marquis, Victoria had been clandestinely married to a young military officer, who resided as a dependent in her father's palace; and who, being ordered with his corps against the Moors, was killed by them in battle. This first marriage of hers remained concealed from the father, till the birth of a son disclosed to him the

secret. The marquis of Lerida having in the mean time fallen in love with Victoria, having no conception of her private connexion, and not at all suspecting her to be a mother or a wife, had demanded her in marriage; to which her father, without consulting her inclinations or asking her acquiescence, had immediately agreed. Upon the discovery of her marriage, the father's anger being appeased by the death of her husband, and the prospect of repairing the injury by joining his widowed daughter to the marquis, he resolved carefully to conceal the secret, took the child from her, sent it to nurse in a peasant's cottage in the Pyrenean mountains, and by violent threats and denunciations, which kept her in apprehension for the safety of her babe's life, induced her to give a reluctant consent to marry the marquis of Lerida, who was all along kept in profound ignorance of her real situation.

No sooner had the marquis departed for Mexico than she, resolving to see her infant, the darling fruit of her first marriage and only love, set out on a visit to the hut in the Pyrenees where it was kept; and during her journey, sinking under the pressure of anxiety and fatigue, fell into premature labour, and was delivered of an infant which immediately died. In the confusion and distress attendant on this accident, she listened to the counsel of her attendant FLORIBEL, whose fidelity she had long proved, and, on her suggestion, substituted LEON, her child by her first husband, in the place of the deceased infant, and thus accomplished the twofold purpose of concealing her untoward accident, and placing the child of her heart not only in her own house but in the ultimate inheritance of a splendid title and an immense estate. In order to give full effect to her plan, and secure it completely from detection, she continued to travel till the disparity of age, between the living infant and the dead one, became wholly imperceptible; and on the marquis's return from South America, she presented Leon to him as his son; in which character the unsuspecting nobleman brought him up and educated him. In the mean time the marquis having, by an illicit connexion with a Mexican lady, had a daughter named Rosaviva, of which he resolved to take care, brought her over to old Spain with him as a child intrusted to his guardianship by a deceased friend, and keeping her in his palace educated her as his ward. Between this young lady and Leon a strong attachment had taken place.

Thus things stand at the palace of Lerida in Madrid when the

play commences; at which crisis the marquis has for some time had information that **LEON** was not his child. His grief preys upon his health, and his indignation is inflamed to fury by the artifices of a wicked wretch of the name of **MALVOGLI**, a Portuguese by birth, whom he entertains about him as a private secretary. This villain, raised from the lowest and most obscure condition by the marquis's bounty, but induced with uncommon subtlety in concealing the worst passions and the most guilty purposes under the plausible appearance of gratitude, zeal, and fidelity, has contrived not only to insinuate himself into the unlimited confidence of his patron the marquis, but to worm himself into the favour and good opinion of the lady, and to manage her with such address as to cajole her out of the great important secret of her life, or in other words to obtain from her a full discovery of her former connexion, and of the real parentage of Leon.

Having armed himself for his mischievous plan of operations in this subtle and treacherous manner, he proceeds with his design; which is to persuade the marquis to give him the hand of Rosaviva, and to settle his estate upon them on the marriage. To this end he at once inflames the jealousy of the marquis, informs Leon privately that Rosaviva is his sister, and terrifies the marchioness from revealing to her husband the whole truth respecting her first connexion and the birth of Leon; and while he thus artfully plays upon the credulity of each, succeeds in his scheme so far that he obtains the marquis's consent to his marriage with Rosaviva, together with an entire surrender of the castle of Lerida and all his estates, to the complete disinherizon of Leon: contracts are even signed to the effect, and anxiety and apprehension are wound up to a painful pitch for the fate of the family, when there appears at the castle a stranger of the most extraordinary dark and terrible character, who all at once discloses that he holds a *secret* and unaccountable power over the villain Malvogli: some mysterious authority, which he exercises with an effect that cannot be resisted. This fellow, whose name is Borrachio, had been long it appears an associate in guilt and deeds of darkness with Malvogli, whose real name is Ruffaldi; and he develops a whole train of villainy in which they were both confederated. In consequence of this discovery the marriage of Rosaviva is prevented; the marchioness is restored to the good opinion, the confidence, and the affection of her husband; and Leon receives the hand of Rosaviva from the marquis.

Respecting the merits of this composition, criticism is reduced to the same state of unwilling acquiescence in the prevailing taste of the times, it is so often called upon to exercise in giving judgment upon most of the productions of fancy, whether novel, romance, or drama, which now inundate Great Britain. All that can be said in favour of this whole class of compositions is that the authors write and make money by them; that the people are pleased to receive them; and that the critic must take them as they come, whether he will or no. Of the *Doubtful Son*, however, it may be asserted, that though the kind be not good, it is tolerably good of the kind. Mrs. Radcliffe, Mr. Matthew Lewis, and Co. have amused (the former indeed delighted) the world; but, to borrow an expression of Falstaff's, they have also done it much harm. A faithful picture of nature, in which man is portrayed as he is really found in the probable course of life, will not now be looked at. If a fable be constructed without romance, horrors, and awe-inspiring mystery, it is "*caviere* to the multitude." Aware of the perverted taste of the public, and perhaps convinced of its depravity, Mr. Diamond displays in all his pieces the most consummate skill in catering for it. No writer can more successfully agitate the feelings by a mysterious involution of fable, engulf the mind in more dark and dread suspense, by the black art of the pen, make a more dismal cauldron of wo rise in the obscurity of the back ground, or sink it again with greater dexterity. In his plays we find not a trace of legitimate comedy; no mirror held up to nature or to man; no delineation of manners; no just portraiture of the human character; none of the probabilities of life; but, on the contrary, a series of romance in dialogue, in which possibility is urged to its extremest verge.

In the play before us, what is offered? Let us only imagine a person, just arrived from Germany and relating it in a mixed company, and consider what every one would think of his veracity or his understanding. One family of no more than six persons, connected to each other by the ordinary domestic ties, and without more reasonable means or motives to go aside than people in domestic life can be supposed to have, are involved in as many secret plots and mysteries, perplexed with as many intricacies, and surrounded with as many snares, in one drama, as the police of the blackest Italian republic; nay, of Venice itself, with its bravoes and its lazaroni, and its canals and gondolas to aid their subtleties,*

ever brought to light in a whole year. The husband has an illegitimate child and a mystery; the wife another child and another mystery; and the husband gives in marriage his mysterious child, which the unravelling of her mystery shows to be the offspring of an adulterous intercourse, to the mysterious child of his wife; and the poor mother sees her good son tied to the fruits of the adulterous wrong offered to her insulted bed. Thus the relations of parent and child and of husband and wife are perplexed; and thus right and wrong, vice and virtue, marquises and secretaries, servants and masters, are made to dance the hayes, cross over, change places, and right and left with each other, till such a cloud of romantic dust and horrible obscurity is raised, that nothing is visible to the moral or critical eye, until it answers the purpose of the author to dispel it; when, with a *presto pass and begone*, the audience are told, and that by the characters themselves, that all matters are settled to satisfaction, that all doubts are at an end; and that all the embarrassments and intricacies have, during the fog, been disentangled. As usual, the villain is detected and sent off; as usual, a reconciliation of all quarrels takes place; and, as usual, the young people are married; and the denouement, of course, is very pleasing and very natural.

Yet this stuff of the imagination, collected from the murky realms of the newfangled romance, is so constructed (and that is the worst of it, because it perpetuates the contagion) as to excite and keep alive, from beginning to end, considerable interest. If we must have dramatic romances instead of plays, however, we shall be content with Mr. Diamond's mode of managing them. Improbable as the incidents of this piece are, and stained as it is in one case by avowed immorality, the action is conducted with much art; the succession of events is unforced and orderly; and the development, though somewhat huddled up, is pleasing. We entertain very little doubt of its success in representation; and we should be wanting in candor if we omitted to say, that, when compared with its fellow travellers through the shortlived existence allotted them by their nature, it deserves some praise. That it should come to this, however, with the British drama, so grieves us, that we cannot help breathing forth our regrets, and saying with Ophelia,

Ah! wo is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see.

DE MONFORT,

A TRAGEDY, BY JOANNA BAILLIE.

BESIDE the tragedy of DE MONFORT, this lady has added to the mass of English poetry a number of plays which deserve the best efforts of criticism in their eulogy and illustration, on account of the originality of their design, and the peculiar beauty and vigor of their execution. Her avowed object is to delineate the stronger passions of the mind. In accomplishing this, she does not, as is usual, take the passion intended to be delineated, at its full grown height, but begins with it at its inchoate state—not in the maturation of the fruit, but in the heart's first reception of the seed; from which she traces it, step by step, in its rise and its progress, up to its ultimate pernicious effects. A conception so great, bold and original, could be the growth of no other than a mind abundantly enriched by nature with genius, fertilized by the best culture, and invigorated by a just confidence in its own resources for the means of carrying so vast a plan into execution. The passion she has chosen to investigate in the tragedy of De Monfort is that of HATRED: how far she has succeeded in her management of the subject, it is our present business to inquire.

Hatred is, unfortunately, so common a feeling, and has furnished so many dramatists, epic poets and essayists with topics for excitation, that it may, at first view, appear little capable of novelty; and so it really would be in ordinary hands; but in those of a person of real genius, nothing appears commonplace: if the thought be old, his pencil portrays it in a new and captivating attitude, and presents it in a rich drapery, the novelty of which makes it original and his own. Thus Miss Baillie has, in De Monfort, contrived to render one of the most familiar and vulgar passions novel, striking and original, not only by forming the general disposition of the person who entertains it a contrast to the character of the passion itself, but by making it apparently disproportionate to the motives which influence him and the hatred he entertains. Effects of the most stupendous, frightful and criminal magnitude are produced; and when the causes are sought for, they are found so diminutive as scarcely to be visible to the naked eye. Nor is this done for the purpose of mystery—that miserable device of modern dramatists; for there is no concealment. From the outset, the hatred is perceptible and the cause is seen in the germ; but to the dim eye it ap-

pears for a while so little adequate to the effect, that the mind disowns its competency, and looks for something more. At first the passion, like the breeze that passes over the smooth surface of a becalmed water, barely ruffles his bosom; but soon it grows to a gale—from the gale it swells into a storm—from the storm to the tempest, and rages till every opposing barrier of virtue is swept away in a whirlwind of fury. And here it is that we ought to dwell upon the great superiority of the author of *De Monfort* to all dramatic poets of our day, in the great primary essential of moral purpose and effect; holding out to parents, as she does in the character of *De Monfort*, the most salutary admonition they can possibly receive for the training up of their children in the way that they should go. Shakspeare shows us the danger of ambition, the mischiefs of jealousy, the hatefulness as well as folly of revenge, in his *Richard*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Shylock*; but he does not point out how and when they are to be prevented; he does not, like our present subject, lay bare the root, and show where to direct the axe. Miss Baillie, in *De Monfort*, inculcates this moral truth, kill the vice in its first seeds—destroy it in the germ; for if once it gains a living lodgment in the heart, it will hold a perpetual despotic dominion over it. Treat it, therefore,

As a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would as its kind, grow mischievous,
And kill it in the shell.

She does more: by endowing with the noblest virtues, particularly with generosity, honour, and benevolence, the man who becomes a prey to so detestable a passion, she holds out an awful warning to mankind not to consider any imaginable portion of virtue a sufficient security against a bad passion, if it be once suffered to get rule in the heart, and gives a terrible example of the fatal effects of an overweening confidence in our own vigilance and resolution.

By her efforts to produce this excellent moral lesson, our admirable authoress has thrown many difficulties in her own way. The fundamental passion of the *Iliad* is the anger of Achilles: but Achilles is complexionally irascible and furious—*ferox*, *iracundus*, *acer*. His provocations too are such as justify some degree of resentment, and, being at the very outset made known, they throw a light on the subject, so that there is no semblance of incongruity between cause and effect, no disproportion to be reconciled. The same may be said of *Richard*, *Macbeth*, &c., in which Shakspeare at once plunges in

medias res, and leaves nothing for conjecture or doubt: but in De Monfort, we have a man who yields to a vice seemingly in direct violation of the general composition of his nature and upon a provocation apparently too trifling to excite serious resentment; a man who, though naturally amiable and benevolent, nourishes in his bosom one of the most detestable passions than can deform human nature; while convinced, nay ashamed of its turpitude, indulges it even to the perpetration of murder, and becomes an assassin; and then, in the excessive sensibility of his nature, immolates himself, and dies of horror at the ruin he has made.

Such is the character and conduct of De Monfort, as it appears to the careless eye, in naked abstraction: but if we follow the author, step by step, through the detail of her hero's feelings, as she traces them from the original cause to the fatal effect, and at the same time take along with us a reasonable knowledge of our common nature, or if, as Shakspeare says, we

“ Know all qualities with a learned spirit
Of human dealings,”

we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that, however unworthy and exceeding all due measure, the hatred of De Monfort may be, it is not at all unnatural; that the cause of it is not of that diminutive size or moderate nature, of which, superficially considered, it appears to be; and that such a disposition, as his, is far from being unsusceptible of excessive and criminal resentment. Extreme sensibility often hoops up, in one narrow circle, the most refined virtues with the blackest vices, all the tender charities with fell hatred, vindictiveness and ruthless cruelty. The same heart that would bleed at the tale of woe, has often, at the instigation of anger, meditated murder. The same hand that, trembling with sympathy, emptied the purse to the beggar's tale, has often, at the call of honour, or of guilty pride, pierced the bosom of a friend with a sword, or sent him to his last account with a pistol. De Monfort has not received from the man he hates any *injury*; but he has received what, to feelings of exquisite sensibility, are infinitely worse—contempt and sneering insult. Not one of the passions is more universally felt, though none perhaps more evades particular notice, than this. Whether it be an infirmity, or a sound part of our composition, it is so intimately woven into the texture of man's nature, that it cannot be removed. Here a stoic may conquer it; there a wretch, subdued to the lowest prostration of spirit, may be insensible to its

operation; but still it pervades our existence: the lowest feel it; the proud cannot dispense with it. "We are born," says Burke, "to shun contempt;" and the peasant who delves the earth is as full of the ethereal spirit, which wings its flight from contempt, as the proud and dignified baron. How exquisitely has a luminous dramatic poet expressed this feeling and its effects upon the human heart:

Surely, out of this,
Revenge may fashion something strangely cruel,
Whose bloody memory, in after times
This truth shall teach inexorable man,
Who has no touch of mercy to his fellow,
Most INJURIES A NOBLE MIND MAY PARDON;
But there are INSULTS CANNOT BE FORGIVEN.

TOBIN'S CURFEW.

Having so far unfolded our sentiments upon this subject, we hope our readers will favour us with their company a little farther, while we endeavour to prove from the play itself the correctness of the opinions we have hazarded.

The Marquis DE MONFORT and his eldest sister, the Lady Jane De Monfort, had, by the death of their parents, become the natural guardians of their younger brothers and sisters, and, for the purpose of discharging the office with fidelity and effect, had forgone all the advantages of connubial life, and remained unmarried. With high rank, hereditary honour, large fortune, the respect of the world, and the love, approaching to adoration, of their friends and dependents, it would seem as if nothing could be wanting to their perfect felicity. To augment those grounds of happiness, they mutually love and revere each other to a degree unexampled in such connexions: yet, both are unhappy: he from some cause, which he keeps in sullen concealment; she, on account of his situation, and her total inability to discover his motives or to remove his sadness.

Her tenderness has at length become irksome to him; her solicitude and inquiries give him pain; and, in order to relieve himself from them, he leaves his house without informing her of his intention, goes to Amberg, a town in Germany, and there puts up at a house he was once before in the habit of frequenting, kept by an old faithful host and humble friend of the name of JEROME. Just on his arrival at Amberg, the play commences.

(To be Continued.)

A NEW PLAY.....OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION.

A correspondent at New York informs us, that a new play intitled, **ALBERTI ALBERTINI OR THE ROBBER KING**, was on the 25th of January performed, with very flattering applause, at the theatre of that city. It is said to be the production of Mr. DUNLAP, once manager of that theatre, and author of some original dramatic pieces; as well as translator of several others from the German. On the merit of this play, we cannot at present offer so much as a conjecture, having not yet had a perusal of it. Of the fable the following sketch has been transmitted to us by our correspondent; and our readers may look for a critical review of the piece, in a future number, provided a copy of it shall fall into our hands.

Feraya, a knight of Malta, in early life falsifies his vows, and contracts an illegal marriage. The fruit of this marriage is a son and daughter. The mother dies. The daughter, Dianora, is educated in a convent, and the son, under the name of Alphonso Albini, is prepared, by Faraya, his father, (in the assumed character of Orsino) for the army. Alphonso, soon after commencing his military career, is brutally misused by a superior officer, and in a paroxysm of rage, revenges himself on the spot. His life becomes forfeit. He flies; falls into the hands of banditti; is eventually elected their leader, and renders himself the terror of Italy under the name of Alberti Albertini, the Robber King.

Feraya, lately appointed general of the Neapolitans, is sent to subdue the Robber King. He disperses the band; but in an accidental rencontre discovers in the dreaded Albertini his long lost son. Albertini also recognises his protector and instructor in the Neapolitan general. The father favors his son's escape; and returning to court, pleads to his master in favor of the Robber King, but in vain; for the monarch, instead of relenting, sets a price of two thousand ducats upon Albertini's head.

At this point the drama commences. Feraya, the father of Albertini, who is known to him only as his instructor, devotes his whole attention to the safety of his son. He disguises himself as a venerable and mysterious hermit, seeks the robber to his wilds, and finds him on the point of another battle. By showing Albertini that he is perfectly acquainted with his early history; and by an artful use of the names of Alphonso and Orsino, Feraya, in this disguise, prevails upon Albertini to intrust with him Rosali, a young girl in whom he (Albertini) is interested, and makes him promise to repair to the house of Feraya, in Naples, disguised as

count Mondochini. At Naples, Albertini finds his Rosali again; and Dianora, his sister, now in her father's house, becomes enamoured of him. This breaks off an intended marriage with count Astutti, a soldier of fortune, who determines to revenge himself. The secret of Albertini is betrayed to Astutti, by Lodovico, his servant, who is seduced by Astutti into a fit of intoxication. Astutti, to gratify his diabolical resentment, and gain the two thousand ducats offered for Albertini, pursues him with unremitting industry, and in one instance attempts to take his life, but is prevented by Lodovic, the Robber King's servant; and they both return to the banditti.

After several escapes, the author brings Albertini into the presence of Feraya, who acknowledges Albertini to be Alphonso, his son. The father congratulates himself that by removing from Italy he may enjoy the society of his children in safety, and forget, in a peaceful old age, the crime which had destroyed their mother and endangered them. At that moment Astutti, having traced Albertini, enters with the officers of justice, and, determining to make sure of vengeance, discharges a pistol at him. Dianora in her anxiety to promote her newly found brother's flight, having thrown herself in the way, receives the ball. Albertini's flight is stopt by his solicitude for his sister; and being once in the power of the officers of justice, all hope of life is cut off. Dianora dies. Albertini kills himself; and the erring father is convinced that there is no peace or safety but in virtue.

BENEFITS OF THE ACTORS.*

AS, before the publication of our next number, the benefits of our actors will begin to take place, we will not dismiss this article, without offering our readers a few words on that subject, and submitting our thoughts upon it to their consideration.

Most people look upon the benefit given to a performer as a mere gratuity; a something allowed to him over and above the emoluments, to which his labours fairly intitle him; but, this is to view the thing in an erroneous and, we must say it, not very generous light. The benefit is a sort of test of the opinion entertained by the public of the performer's merit; and is, in fact, a portion of his compensation, made wholly distinct from his fixt salary, in order that so much of it at least may be measured by the general estimate of his services, and the value set upon his acting by the public. This is the true reason, why actors feel so much about their benefit; for, upon an average, very little profit accrues to them

after paying the expenses, even when the house is what they call a middling one. Considering it as symptomatic of the state of their professional fame, they feel most poignantly at any neglect upon the part of the public, on that occasion. Indeed, who would not feel acutely any disappointment on an expectation in which the two most important concerns of life are involved: character and subsistence?

Yet it is not always a true test of the performer's merit; nor is it, by any means, an infallible diagnostic of the public opinion. Caprice has much to do in it. We have seen actors, who, after playing almost every night in play or farce, many nights in both, being justly applauded every time and keeping the house in a roar of merriment, have at their benefit been left as completely in the lurch, as if they were wholly unknown in the city. This is not acting generously. This is not acting *justly*.

Here are in Philadelphia, perhaps, between two and three thousand people, who are in the constant habit of attending the theatre. Night after night, they receive great pleasure from a particular actor; they express that pleasure by plaudits, and by laughter; and they say to those near them, "Vastly well indeed!—very comical! exceedingly diverting!" and yet, when the time comes for giving that actor his reward, they turn aside; and the only time they neglect attending his performance is—at his benefit.

Though there be no positive expressed obligation, on the part of the public, there is an implied one, a kind of tacit contract that if the actor pleases them for the season, they will mark their approbation by going to his benefit at the end of it. To fail in this is a manifold wrong: withholding his reward from the labourer, refusing to give their testimony to his deserts, and thereby hurting his feelings and injuring his professional character. We know that the actor's claim to this cannot be entertained in a court of law; but it will hold good *in foro conscientiae*, and no just, generous, or proud spirit will demur to it.

We therefore earnestly exhort all who read this, all lovers of the drama, all who wish to draw around us here the most valuable performers by a fair and flattering retribution, not to be over frugal on the ensuing benefit season; but on the contrary, to call to recollection the services of those, who have during the season contributed to their happiness four nights of each week, and in return, to make each of them happy for one.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE new arrangements adopted, for conducting **THE MIRROR OF TASTE**, have necessarily retarded the appearance of this Number, a few days beyond the time appointed for publication; which hereafter will, without fail, take place on the fifth day of each month for the number belonging to the preceding. The removal of the work to a new printing office, of itself, occasioned some delay; the total change in the form of the play, rendered the printing of it, in the first instance, more arduous and slow; and the commencement of the new plan, like the beginning of every operose process, met with difficulties which it will not have to encounter in its future progress. To use a sea-phrase, we have now "got under way;" our sails feel the breeze of Hope; and all impediments being passed, our little bark steers to her destined port.

*Tendimus in Latium; sedes ubi fata quietas
Ostendunt.*

The best concerted and most diligent exertions have not enabled us to procure the portrait due to our subscribers for December month. Till yesterday Mr. Edwin had it not in his power to proceed with the portrait of Mr. Warren. Measures were, therefore, taken to procure an engraving of Mr. Cooke from New-York; and in the certain expectation of receiving it in due time, a biographical sketch of that great actor now constitutes an article of this number: but a something, for which we are unable to account, has prevented our request being complied with. We consider ourselves, however, as bound to make good to our subscribers the stipulated number of plates; among which we pledge ourselves for an excellent portrait of Mr. Cooke: Mr. Edwin being now able to apply himself to the work of the Mirror; and having agreed to an arrangement which will preclude the possibility of disappointment for the future.

We regret our inability to accompany the print of Master Payne with a few words respecting the life of the original, whose popularity would no doubt render it grateful to the public. We have to thank that young gentleman for his portrait; but lament that his modesty withheld the rest.